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OFFICIAL MARVEL ZOMBIE™ MAGAZINE!
MARVEL AGE®
A MARVEL AGE EXCLUSIVE!
CLIVE BARKER
INTERVIEW

STAN LEE PRESENTS
MARVEL AGE®

Witterstaetter's Witticisms

"I didn't eat the brains. . .my mother did!"

I was saving this line to open my autobiography, but it just seemed so appropriate for our Clive Barker/November issue. And, it's true.

Okay, okay. . .They were only squirrel brains. It wasn't unusual for us to eat "squirrel 'n' dumplings" or to have fried squirrel sitting alongside the Thanksgiving turkey (or even deer meatloaf, for that matter!). This meal was often followed by my grandmother pouring coffee into a saucer instead of a cup (cools off faster) or my Dad putting chunks of cornbread into his glass of buttermilk.

None of this would sound so strange if you are from the South.

Imagine how I felt when I came up North and tried to find "edible" food. What's a knish? Who would even *want* to eat lox and bagels? They put *brown* gravy on the meatloaf here! And I don't even *want* to know what's *really* in blood sausage!

But hey, I've been here four years, and I'm not starving!

There's as large a variety of food out there are there is people who eat it. What we have to be careful of is not judging people anymore for wearing a turban or having long hair than we would for them eating goat eyes or a tuna fish sandwich.

Maybe, we can even learn to appreciate the beauty of difference.

My most memorable Thanksgiving experience? Glad you asked! It was in Alice Springs, Australia, in the outback, close to Ayers Rock. A friend's brother worked on the Aboriginal reserve where we set up an open flame pit that meshed perfectly with the red dust desert and brilliant sunset. Our fire drew several visitors — including a few Aborigines, who had a bowl of freshly dug wichity grubs. They took the grubs, covered them with hot coals, and tended them until they plumped up like strange, white hot dogs.

Yes, I ate one. What did it taste like? Actually, a lot like squirrel brains. Small world.

Have a good Thanksgiving. . .in whatever way you wish to experience it.

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LOVE AND COSMIC RAYS ARE IN THE AIR!

ITEM! MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE would like to take this opportunity to express congratulations on the 30th anniversary of "The World's Greatest Comic Magazine" — the FANTASTIC FOUR, and, subsequently, the Marvel Universe itself. Marveloids can check out the FF's 30th anniversary issue, on sale now, and the MARVEL MILESTONES edition of FANTASTIC FOUR #1! These are not to be missed!

ES LA HORA! ES LA HORA DE CAPITAN AMERICA!

ITEM! is amazing! Is — how you say — spectacular! Is the new Captain America movie!

That's right, all you nay sayers! The Captain America movie *is* doing the theatrical thing — at the Trocadero theater in Los Angeles. We're pretty excited about seeing *Capitan America* in Spanish, even though we don't speak hardly a word of it. And, in keeping with the theme of our MARVEL AGE Media Watch, we invite you readers to submit any advertisements of foreign Marvel movies to us. We hear that *El Punisherio* is quite a hit in Brazil . . .

Photo by Andy Mangels.

BONNIE'S HEROIC ACT

ITEM! At New York City's recent free Paul Simon concert, last August, Marvel staffer Bonnie Berryman of our Domestic Licensing Department was among the 750,000 attending. Bonnie witnessed a life threatening accident on her way to the show, as an automobile struck a pedestrian, critically injuring him. Bonnie applied the proper first aid, and the New York City Police Department informed her that the citizen would have probably died if not for her timely efforts.

We salute you!

ALF HITS 50

ITEM! That's right, everyone's favorite Melmacian has just reached his fiftieth issue! This anniversary occasion simply couldn't be passed by without mention — so we're mentioning it! Alf's a big favorite here around the Marvel offices, especially when he puns. Follow Alf's nutty adventures as he wreaks more havoc than you can shake a cat at!

JIM HAS AN ANT FARM

ITEM! We've been getting asked a lot lately, what's Jim Salicrup up to? Well, besides being Marvel's newest *(and first)* New Projects Editor, he's also raising ants! Several months back, Jim was the proud recipient of an *Uncle Milton's Fascinating Ant Farm,* but it wasn't until just recently that he was able to stock it with ants.

As you ant farm aficionados are well aware, the ant farm purchaser sends in a livestock coupon, and then, just one week later, receives a free batch of ants in the mail! WAM!–guy Dwight Jon Zimmerman has taken the little red fellows to heart, and many mornings shares his bagel with them. Who'd have imagined that Jim would've gone from being the Spider-Man to the Ant-Man?

WORST SONG IN THE WORLD, *OR* THE BULLPEN

ITEM! Those wacky guys in the Bullpen!

Inspired by the *New York Post's* Top Ten List of the worst songs of all time, the Bullpenners formed their own concise accounting of what they felt to be the worst songs of all time. Steve Bunche was instrumental in accomplishing this task, since it was his newspaper to begin with. After the Top Ten Songs were tabulated, the Finals round was formed, to come up with the absolutely worst song of all time.

Many thought it was going to be *Ice Ice Baby* . . . Others were convinced that Dancing Queen was a shoo-in. But when the dust cleared, the undisputed winner was *We Built This City* by Starship. It just goes to show you that everybody's a critic.

YOU LOOK MARVEL*US!*

ITEM! In last issue's *Mondo Marvel Comics*, we heralded the debut of Marvel's newsletter, as of that time unnamed. Well, press time has a way of doing things like that to you.

Well, as of August 20, 1991, the Marvel newsletter is officially entitled MARVEL*US!* The title was submitted by that editorial fellow, Evan Skolnick, and for his efforts he received a handsome, limited edition Spider-Man bisque! (oooooh!) And a limited edition Planet Studios pin! (aaaah!)

As we reported last month, the newsletter is chock full of useful information, so that Marvel's plethora of staffers can keep tabs on all the hot gossip.

MARVEL*US!*

Volume 1 Number 2 — A Newsletter by and for Marvel Employees — August 1991

SHOUT-OUTS from Terry Stewart

Yo—

Gee! This is awful. I now have to come up with a whole load a column at least every couple of weeks. Already I get writer's block. Just like you creatives.

FIRST ANNUAL MARVEL PICNIC

knee down, apply a tourniquet and stop the bleeding. She stayed with the injured man until the ambulance arrived. The New York City police department gave her a phone call the next morning, informing her that, without her help, the man would probably have died.

WHERE CAN I GET THOSE WONDERFUL TOYS?

ITEM! Just look at all the great products available to you now that the holiday gift-giving season is almost upon us. There's a whole new batch of posters from the Marvel Press, including the re-issues of Todd McFarlane's Hulk! There's a great, big batch of MARVEL MASTERWORKS making its way to you, featuring the adventures of Daredevil, Silver Surfer, Spider-Man, and Thor! And how about that HOOK adaptation we've been hearing so much about, featuring art by Charles Vess and many others? Of course, there's a slew of graphic novels, like the Punisher's BLOOD ON THE MOORS, the new X-MEN toys, and that cute little Fievel in AMERICAN TAIL: FIEVEL GOES WEST. Ho, ho, ho, and Merry Thanksgiving.

— AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR

ITEM! The heat of August is upon us at this writing, but it'll be mid-October when you read this, which means that the dreaded holiday season is just around the corner. That's right, only 30 more shopping days to go to get those Thanksgiving Day gifts!

And what better way to celebrate the rapidly approaching Holiday Season than by checking out the MARVEL CHRISTMAS SPECIAL, which features work by some of Marvel's hottest super stars! You'll see Arthur Adams! You'll thrill to Sal Buscema! You'll gasp at Dave Cockrum! Not to mention the fact that it's edited by none other than The Big "R.W." herself!

Seriously, though, it's a great way to see some of your fave characters and creators in a slightly different vein than usual!

Remember: Not only does Santa know if you've been bad or good, but he knows if you've bought the MARVEL CHRISTMAS SPECIAL!

Photo by Thon O'Connor

ALSO IN THE NEWS:

ITEM! Good news for those of you who've been in the Negative Zone for the last two years, as Marvel will be reissuing some of its hot trade paperbacks again! First up, keeping in with our Daredevil 300th Issue promotion, is the DAREDEVIL & PUNISHER: CHILD'S PLAY title, which reprints DD #182-184! See these two hardboiled guys go toe-to-toe, courtesy of Frank Miller and Klaus Janson! Also on the DD front is the MARKED FOR DEATH trade paperback, which features Miller's first work on the DAREDEVIL title, the introduction of Ben Urich, and that nasty Bullseye guy.

If you're looking forward to Charles Vess's HOOK adaptation of Steven Spielberg's new movie starring Dustin Hoffman and Robin Williams, you may want to sneak a peak at THE RAVEN BANNER, a tale of Asgaard that'll rock your socks! More Charles Vess work is coming your way in SPIRITS OF THE EARTH, in which Spider-Man goes to Scotland to fight ghosts and the Hellfire Club!

Finally, for you Captain America fans, is the reissue of the awesome CAPTAIN AMERICA: THE CLASSIC YEARS by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby, which faithfully re-presents the original run of CAPTAIN AMERICA comics from the early 1940's. It's a two-volume hardcover with a slipcase, and it's worth every penny. Then there's MARVEL MASTERWORKS VOL. 14, featuring Captain America, in more Lee/Kirby adventures. Miss it not!

THE EYES HAVE IT!

ITEM! During the production of Todd McFarlane's sideways swan-song issue of SPIDER-MAN, Marvel's Editor in Chief noticed a pointed discrepency. It appears that while Spidey and X-Force were in pitched combat with the Juggernaut, the big villain gets his eye poked out by Shatterstar's sword. OUCH!

Well, wouldn't you know, it was simply too graphic for the code approved comic book and the scene needed to be corrected. But, seeing that MARVEL AGE *isn't* a code approved book, we're able to show it to you here. Hmmmm.

So during the First Annual Marvel Company Picnic, the full scoop on which you can spy in this very issue, Tom pitched the idea to our editor to run both pieces side by side, so that the readers could see the before and after. So here you go, Marveloids! Enjoy — and don't run with scissors!

BEFORE

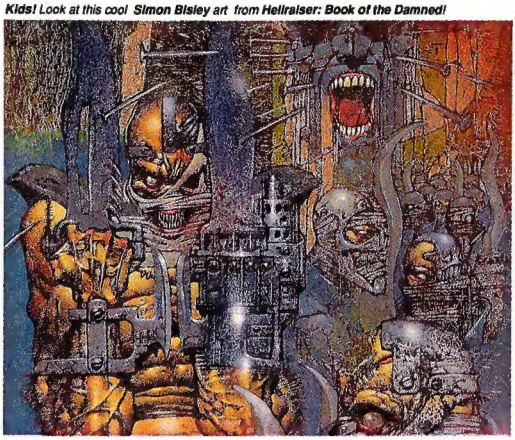
AFTER

THE MODEL'S NAME IS DOOM!

ITEM! Yes, once again, Horizon Hobbies has dazzled us with yet another excellent vinyl model, this time of the Latverian monarch, Doctor Doom! The good doctor stands thirteen inches tall, and sports a really bad attitude!

You should be able to find him, along with the Thing model we showed you last issue, at all of the better hobby and comic book specialty shops in your area. Just wait until you see the model kit we show you *next* month!

Kids!** Look at this cool **Simon Bisley** art from **Hellraiser: Book of the Damned!



HARVESTING THE EVIL

ITEM! Just in time for the Halloween season comes Epic Comics' new Harvest of Evil promotion! Clive Barker will be touring the United States and Canada to promote Epic's new HELLRAISER: BOOK OF THE DAMNED, the new JIHAD series, and the pulse-pounding HELLRAISER POSTERBOOK, as well as his latest literary terror tale, *Imajica,* published by Harper & Row.

But that's not all — the now legendary Marv Wolfman and Gene Colan TOMB OF DRACULA series is a heavy hitter in the Harvest of Evil. If you haven't had the opportunity to check out this title, or MARVEL AGE's 5-page preview in issue #105, then get on down to your local comics shop and do so! It's almost dawn, after all!

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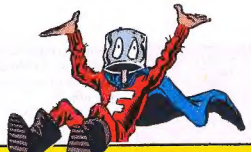
PRESENTING — THE FIRST ANNUAL FORBIE AWARDS!



ITEM! Over the years, many of Marvel's creators, titles, and characters have won numerous awards. Some prestigious, others *really* prestigious! After careful consideration, and the desire to let Marvel's creative people know how much we love 'em, MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE would like to announce (drum roll, please —!) the first Annual FORBIE AWARDS!

What's a Forbie Award, you ask? Well, here's how it works. A lot of these comics awards are voted on by the creative people in the industry. The Forbies are voted upon by *you the readers!* You'll be voting for titles with a 1991 cover date, whether it's a Marvel or Epic title, and you can vote as many times as you want (providing each ballot comes in a separate envelope!) Also, you need not mutilate this fine periodical to vote. You may photo copy this page, or use any piece of paper. Winners will be announced in our January cover-dated issue, or #110 for those of you who are counting. All ballots must be received by December 20, 1991! (Sure, sure, it's an eleven day leeway, but life's like that!)

Simply address your ballots:

MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE,
c/o Marvel Comics Group
FORBIE AWARDS
387 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10016

OFFICIAL VOTING BALLOT FOR 1991 FORBIE AWARDS

BEST MARVEL COMIC BOOK SERIES:

BEST EPIC COMIC BOOK SERIES:

BEST LIMITED SERIES:

BEST GRAPHIC NOVEL or TRADE PAPERBACK:

BEST STORY (book, issue no., and title):

BEST STORY ARC (book, issue nos., and title):

BEST COVER:

BEST WRITER:

BEST ARTIST:

BEST INKER/EMBELLISHER:

BEST COLORIST:

BEST LETTERER:

BEST COVER ARTIST:

BEST EDITOR:

FORBIE HALL OF FAME (Lifetime achievement award):

MARVEL® TOP TEN LIST

The Shaper of Worlds — The Kingpin — The Impossible Man — Mr. Fantastic. These are the names of some of the Marvel Universe's esteemed citizens. And yet, you have to admit, they certainly do have goofy names. Norrin Radd? Not much better than the Silver Surfer, if you ask me. Nick Fury? What's he, a pro-wrestler?

But even these names pale in comparison to the silliness of the Marvel Monsters of the 1950's. For a more in-depth report, we direct you to HEMBECK's column on page 16. But here, for the record, are the Top Ten Silly Monster Names of all time.

10. GROT, *The Monster From Planet X*
9. TABOO, *The Thing From The Murky Swamp*
8. TIM BOO BAH
7. CREATURE *From Kro-garr*
6. The BLIP
5. ZZUTTAK
4. VAN DOOM *The Man Who Made a Creature*
3. KRAA *The Unhuman*
2. The GLOP
1. GROTTU *King of the Insects*

— *Mike Lackey*

MARVEL® TRIVIA QUIZ

My folks recently handed me a second grade writing assignment I did at the age of 7. It concerned how I wanted to be a werewolf so that I'd never have to go to the barber, and how I thought I would enjoy drinking blood. Now I understand why they kept me in that locked room for so many years!

While Marvel's own fascination with monsters and horror is as current as our story this month on Clive Barker, the monster connection dates wayyy back. After all, even The Thing was essentially a mainstream monster character, brilliantly adapted to the super hero milieu. In between, we've seen vampires, zombies, mummies and more — all lovingly surveyed in the following twelve trivia questions. Answers, as always, on page 31.

—Brian Nelson

1. Where did Danny Ketch find the motorcycle that enabled his mystical change into the Ghost Rider?
   A) Cypress Hills Cemetery
   B) Gallagher's Junkyard
   C) Roosevelt Island
   D) Zarathos Discount Motors

2. One of the stars of Clive Barker's NIGHTBREED is a man searching for a new home for the Nightbreed, a man formerly known as Boone but now known as:
   A) Cabal
   B) Cable
   C) Kabala
   D) Robin Leach

3. Werewolf by Night recently found himself trapped between Silver Dagger and a werewolf motorcycle gang:
   A) The Lunatic Legion
   B) The Braineaters
   C) The Skullchewers
   D) The Fursome Foursome

4. The Living Mummy recently popped up as a key player in:
   A) The Bloodstone Hunt
   B) Acts of Vengeance
   C) Critical Mass
   D) Wimbledon

5. Who ended the existence of Simon Garth, the Zombie?
   A) his daughter Donna
   B) the voodoo god Damballah
   C) the houngan Papa Doc
   D) the dictator Manuel Noriega

6. Among other tales of horror, SUPERNATURAL THRILLERS presented the account of which mechanized murder machine?
   A) CHRISTINE
   B) KILLDOZER
   C) THE CAR
   D) the 1974 Ford Pinto

7. Dracula was once brought back to life with the help of which virgin?
   A) the gypsy Lianda
   B) Domini
   C) Aurora Rabinowitz
   D) Brooke Shields

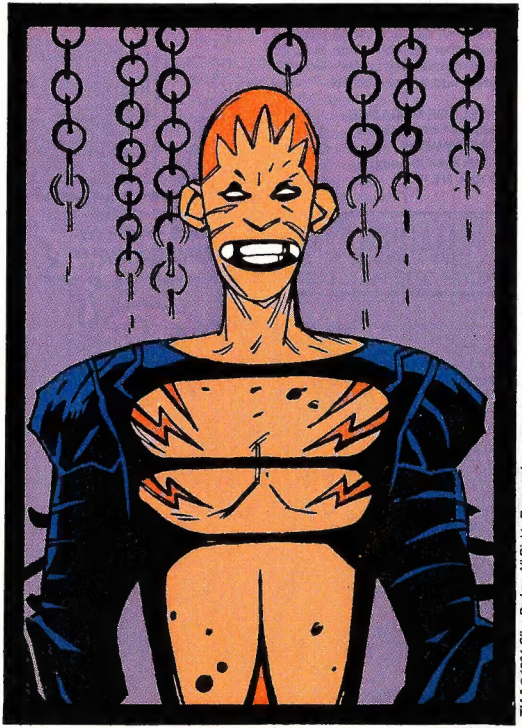
8. Which woman was an intimate of living vampire Michael Morbius?
   A) Amanda Saint
   B) Rachel Van Helsing
   C) Agatha Harkness
   D) celebrity interviewer Leeza Gibbons

9. Marie Laveau, the voodoo queen of New Orleans, made her Marvel debut in:
   A) STRANGE TALES
   B) ADVENTURE INTO FEAR
   C) DRACULA LIVES!
   D) MEET MISTY

10. Premiering in MARVEL SPOTLIGHT, this man battles the monsters that had terrorized his family for generations, under the name Dragon-Lord:
   A) Kenuichio Harada
   B) Shiro Yashida
   C) Tako Shamara
   D) Richard Dragon

11. The Man-Thing was constantly antagonized by construction magnate:
   A) F.A. Schist
   B) Jackson Bain
   C) Micah Synn
   D) Donald Trump

12. Who introduced the first issue of Marvel's horror anthology TOWER OF SHADOWS?
   A) Satana
   B) Digger
   C) the Watcher
   D) District Attorney Blake Tower



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STAN'S SOAPBOX

Hi, Heroes!

A couple of Soapboxes ago I promised to clue you in to the glory and grandeur of comicdom's most exciting new club — the wild and wacky world of WAM! And now, at last, the truth can be told, the secrets can be revealed, the wonderment may finally be savored by True Believers throughout the galaxy!

You must realize, of course, that the mere act of reading the paragraphs that follow automatically pledges you to strictest secrecy. None but the most dedicated Marvelites must ever know what the illustrious initials W.A.M. stand for! Only one such as you, you who are favored amongst all those culturally deprived unfortunates who have not yet discovered the majesty of the Bullpen, only you may be heir to the secret of the century, to the potent and pandemonious words which have replaced "Open Sesame" as the key to unlock emotional riches hitherto undreamed of; to the words soon destined to become a rallying cry for the greatest army of comicbook aficionados the world has ever known — the words "Wild Agents of Marvel!"

But for those of you who remember not the first, fabulous, ever-lamented Marvel Club, the majestic "Merry Marvel Marching Society," or its semi-sensational succcessor, "Friends of Ol' Marvel" (both better known as the MMMS and FOOM!), let me emphasize that your Bullpen buddies have one reason and one alone for creating so vast and valiant a world-wide organization — and that reason is *fun*! Forget the fact that WAM will make us all more famous and sought-after than ever before! Forget the fact that WAM's swelling membership ranks will certainly become a potent force in politics and international affairs! Forget the fact that every officially designated Wammer will undoubtedly become an object of adulation and desire to members of the opposite sex! Forget the fact that your WAM membership will be a source of ever-growing envy in the hearts of lesser men and women! Remember only this: If it isn't *fun*, we ain't doin' it!

And now, in keeping with my usual low-key and unemotional approach to such matters, let ol' Stan Cool tell you a bit more about what to expect on that glorious day when you learn you've been accepted into the rollickin' ranks of WAM! (And remember, *any* scientist might be eligible for a Nobel Prize — but only a tried and tested Marvelite can hope to become a Wammer!)

To begin with, you'll receive an individually numbered membership kit. Think of it! Your own Marvel membership number; no one else on Earth can have one like it! You'll also receive a cloisonne badge which will be the envy of every cloisonne freak in town! Of course you'll get your official WAM full-color poster which, this year, features Wolverine, Cyclops, Storm, Havok and Cable — not to mention a wall certificate which is not only suitable for framing, but practically *demands* to be framed and hung next to your Doctorate diploma! Also, since you'll surely want to write countless letters to us expressing your undying gratitude for all these goodies, we'll magnanimously send you an official WAM portfolio and stationery kit!

But hey, that's only the tip of the iceberg! How about the quarterly newsletter you'll receive, full of truly top-secret stuff that only a Wammer can appreciate! And then there are the countless catalogs of clever, crafty, capricious commodities which will be sent to WAM members only (If they fall into unqualified hands, they'll explode on contact!) You'll even have a chance to obtain a replication of the original, now-classic "Merry Marvel Marching Society" membership kit, complete with a record featuring the actual voices of the original Bullpen! I could go on and on, but the mind begins to boggle!

However, I mustn't forget to mention the biggest surprise of all, the most original benefit ever offered to any club members anywhere! Each week a few Wammers' membership numbers will be selected at random and the lucky holders of those numbers will receive a personal letter — or even a phone call — from some prominent member of the Bullpen! Just think, your chance to rap with one of your favorite artists, writers or editors; to exchange ideas and offer suggestions which might be adopted in future issues! And why not? Whenever you're yakkin' with some Bullpen great, you're yakkin' with another Wild Agent of Marvel — which makes you an equal among equals!

I'd like to tell you more, because there are still so many, many additional advantages to your WAM membership, but I'm getting all choked up. I mean, even Mr. Cool can find himself misty eyed when I think of the wonderful benefits Marvel is so generously bestowing upon its riotous ranks of readers!

Before signing off however, let me remind you of still another way we're demonstrating our care and consideration. You needn't even buy a stamp to join the light-hearted legion of WAM! You can simply march in, proud as a peacock, to your nearest comicbook store, since virtually all of them are serving as official WAM recruiting headquarters and merchandise marts!

And now, before you think I'm trying to sell you something, let me sign off with the words that made Irving Forbush famous — and I hope they'll do the same for us: "Tout comprendre, c'est tout pardonner!"

Excelsior!

Stan

Stan Lee

WILLIE LUMPKIN

© 1991 by Stan Lee and Dan DeCarlo

HOW COME YOU NEVER TRIED OUT FOR THE BASKETBALL TEAM, STRETCH?
BASKETBALL TEAM? WHO NEEDS IT?!
BUT DON'T THE GIRLS ALL ADMIRE BASKETBALL PLAYERS?
SURE, LUMPY!
BUT WHILE THEY'RE CHEERIN' FOR THEM...
THEY'RE SITTIN' WITH US!

Epic Editor Marc McLaurin and Clive Barker at a Chicago convention. Photo by: Marie Javins.

THE CLIVE-BARKER INTERVIEW

Stephen King called him *"the future of horror."* He's sold millions of books across the globe, in over a dozen languages. Some have likened his looks to Paul McCartney, others have compared his imagery to a deranged psycho. But no matter what they say about Clive Barker, there is one undisputable fact that no one can deny. This guy can write.

Barker's earlier works were short fiction, and were later collected in the multi-volumed *Books of Blood,* the first of many works to see print in the United States. But eventually, that first big story came bursting out, and *The Damnation Game* was born. The success of this first novel gave Clive the incentive to continue with longer works, and the novels *Weaveworld* and *Cabal* soon followed.

Movie offers began to come in, slowly at first. Among these films was *Rawhead Rex,* about a monstrous-warrior terrorizing an Irish village. Finally, Clive was offered a deal to write and direct *Hellraiser,* a story about love, death, and Cenobites. Clive's brutal visions of Hell have continued to influence filmmakers, now some five years later. The movie did well enough to warrant a sequel. *Hellbound* expanded on the Hellraiser mythology, serving up bizarre imagery and hideous monsters. The Hellraiser characters proved so popular that an Epic Comics HELLRAISER series took off in 1990, featuring the Cenobites in an anthology format.

Barker spent much of the next year working on his greatest film project to date, *Nightbreed,* an adaptation of his book, *Cabal*. Clive served as both writer and director, and the $11 million epic was among the most expensive horror films ever produced. *Nightbreed* offered a wide assortment of creatures, and starred Canadian horror director David Cronenberg as a psychotic serial killer. The film later spawned another Epic Comics series, NIGHTBREED, which features the "Breed" in new adventures.

Now, Clive Barker returns with his first novel in almost two years, titled *Imajica,* and published by Harper-Collins. Also on the horizon are a series of trade paperbacks and poster books featuring the best of the HELLRAISER and NIGHTBREED series, produced, of course, by Epic Comics. The promotion tying this all together "Harvest of Evil," which will take Clive on a tour of the country.

During the course of this nationwide event, Clive will appear in numerous book stores for signings, and be featured on the television programs *Good Morning America* and *Author! Author!*

Part of the promotion will be a heavy push on Epic's new JIHAD title, which features the HELLRAISER and NIGHTBREED characters coming together in a conflict which may destroy them both. Clive's very excited about this series, as it ties the continuity of his two greatest works together. Barker will serve as a consulting editor on the series, which is written by D.G. Chichester and illustrated by Paul Johnson.

Also on the horizon for Clive is Epic's adaptation of WEAVEWORLD, which will be available in autumn, 1991, and the upcoming series, HELLRAISER: BOOK OF THE DAMNED.

Another great "Harvest of Evil" item is the HELLRAISER POSTER BOOK, which reprints some of the best artwork from the series, by some of the industry's greatest talents. Who'd have thought that Pinhead would have a staple in his navel?

Futhermore, a third HELLRAISER film is in production now, slated for a summer 1992 release.

MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE was fortunate enough to wrangle Clive for this exclusive interview.

MAM: *Hi, Clive. First up, what can you tell us about your new novel, Imajica?*

CLIVE BARKER: Well, it's a huge book, published by Harper & Row. It's 825 pages, and it's a massive fantasy epic. It's exactly the sort of work that people have begun to associate with me, in that it's filled with strange worlds and strange people. It's filled with erotocism and dark imagery.

It's also probably my most optimistic book to date, and it certainly covers the widest canvas. It is set in five different worlds, one of them being earth, and

Imajica is the collective name for those worlds. I've just gotten off the phone with my publisher and the book, although not even out yet, is going in for a second printing. There's just been a tremendous response.

MAM: *It's been a little while since your last book. Where have you been?*

CB: Well, it's taken me 18 months to write *Imajica*, and it's been very demanding. Just before that I wrote *The Great and Secret Show*, which probably took about 10 months. This book is so huge, that the mythology took many months to create. There are literally hundreds of characters, and many different worlds described in great detail. It's not the sort of thing that you can simply dash off.

I hand-write everything. Now, I've done three drafts on Imajica, which comes to about 14,000 pages. When you're working on a novel, you really must give your life over to the project. This is my eleventh book, and I'm fortunate to know that the audience is there for it. I'm not just writing in the dark.

MAM: *Well, Mrs. Tolstoy hand-wrote three different drafts of "War and Peace" by hand.*

CB: Then I'd say that Mrs. Tolstoy served her husband above and beyond the call of duty. Actually, though, they didn't have computers back then, and writing was really simply a question of getting out the old quill pen and some ink. That's a method that has worked for me. I'm fortunate in that I've got two wonderful typists, one here and one in England. They transcribe my hieroglyphics into something that's readable.

MAM: *You're touring now as part of the HARVEST OF EVIL promotion. How's it going, so far?*

CB: I start in 3 weeks. First I'll be touring in the United States and Canada, and then it's on to England.

MAM: *Do you like meeting the fans?*

CB: Absolutely. I love going to the conventions and meeting the readers. To see their excitement and enthusiasm is fun. It's the exact same thing in the book stores. Some authors may think that it's a chore, and will only scribble their initials in the book. I try to learn the name of the person I'm signing the book for. The central relationship for me is with my readers. What good is your story if it exists in a vacuum? The readers validate me as an individual. They are absolutely the central focus in my life.

I feel that the readers are the co-creators of the books they read. The books are created twice. Once, in the imagination of the author while writing the book, and the second time in the imagination of the reader as he reads it. Novels are different from one person to another. Readers cast the movie's characters in their mind's eye.

Films are right there in front of you. It's a more concrete art form. Your experience of going to see *Terminator 2* will be exactly the same as my experience of

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going to see *Terminator 2*.

MAM: *What do you think about the Epic Comics adaptations of WEAVEWORLD and NIGHT BREED?*

CB: Well, if you ask Marcus McLaurin or Tom Daning they'll tell you that I do show more than simply a passing interest in the books. I've been a fan of comics since my early teens, and except for 2 or 3 years where I decided I didn't want to read them . . . I call it the Dark Ages . . . I've enjoyed them ever since. I couldn't live without comics.

I've been a longtime fan of the American comics, and now I like many of the European comics, like *Heavy Metal*.

I did not read the EC Comics, not in Liverpool, so I was not exposed to them until much later. I enjoyed the super hero stuff. The early Marvel stuff, some DC, although not as much . . . I do not say that because of this MARVEL AGE interview, by the way.

So I'm very enthusiastic, seeing my mythologies in comic book form. In both HELLRAISER and NIGHTBREED, I see it as an invitation to creators to redefine and reshape the pre-existing mythologies. There has been a wonderful breadth of responses from the creators.

They've just added a new addendum, which will extend the mythology even more, allowing for a wider breadth of stories. I think it's very exciting to see my ideas and characters in new and fresh ways. Some of the stories are erotic, some are sociological, some have a political sense. It looks great, too, the artists are really in top form.

MAM: *What's the new BOOK OF THE DAMNED book and how does it relate to the other HELLRAISER books?*

CB: This book takes the HELLRAISER world, and expands it exponentially. There are new Cenobites, a new sense of the laws and regulations of Hell. This book guides the reader through the interrelated levels of reality. It's a map to the HELLRAISER mythos. It's the ideal companion to the worlds of HELLRAISER.

MAM: *Weaveworld and Cabal are both such highly detailed novels. It's amazing they were able to adapt the work into comics form at all. Do you find it difficult to adapt your works into screenplays?*

CB: Well, Mike, you have to look at them as a different animal. Sometimes you'll be at a movie with some friends, and as you leave the theater somebody says, "it was nothing like the book." Well of course — it's a movie! I think comics are the same in that respect. They are going to be different.

It's nonsense to demand that an adaptation follows the original work too closely. The medium of comics makes different demands on the adapter. It is a whole other experience in the making and the reading. So I try not to be one to say "you must adapt this story word for word." It's really up to others to interpret the text from which it's adapted.

It isn't as if the original book no longer exists. It's right there on the shelf, waiting for you. And maybe if a person who's unfamiliar with my work reads one of the comics, they'll be curious enough to pick up one of the novels. So nobody really comes out bad. The comic book creators bring visual creativity to it, and the readers get what they want.

MAM: *Do you have any big screen projects coming up?*

CB: Yes. I have a *top secret* screenplay at Universal. It's a science-fiction picture, and I'm also executive producing for Propoganda Pictures. It's called *Candy Man*, directed by Bernard Rose. adapted it from my story *The Forbidden*. Then of course, even though I had nothing to do with it, is *Hellraiser III: Hell on Earth*, which is Pinhead's triumphant return to the silver screen. Then of course, there's the *secret projects*.

MAM: *Do you like writing screenplays? How would you compare it to writing prose?*

CB: Well, I've never written anything I didn't intend to direct. So to me it's simply the first part of the process. I'm not sure if I would enjoy doing it if I didn't. I wouldn't consider it a finished thing. I think it was director Paul Schrader who said that a screenplay "is an invitation to a collective work of art." A screenplay is a blueprint. I realize that I'm still a fledgling at it, and I'm still at the beginning of my directing career. Although the invitations are out there.

MAM: *What interested you in making the leap from writing prose to directing film?*

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CB: Writing is such a solitary business. As I said, it was something like fifteen to eighteen months writing *Imajica*, and in that time I really haven't interacted with too many people. Movies is more of a communal experience. When you get it right, you have made a benign family unit. When things turn out right, you really enjoy yourself. I miss that atmosphere. Directing compensates for those times when I'm locked away writing. It's the part of me that enjoys getting out. It's very therapeutic. If it wasn't for my working in films, I'd be very insular and cranky.

MAM: *In general, how difficult is it to get your material past the censors? Are the Americans more lenient than the British?*

CB: I've had problems with my movies. I've had problems with the *Hellraiser* movies in particular. So I've had to censor specific bits of my work, yes. Clearly, I make movies for adult sensibilities. I view film as a metaphor for a state of mind. It is never my intent to upset people in a negative way. If they were upset by the film, I would hope that it would be in a *positive* way, so that they could think about the issues in the film and draw their own conclusions about them. That just doesn't interest me. I don't think it's fair to compare *Hellraiser* with *Friday the 13th*, either. I don't find "Slasher Movies" very interesting at all. Pictures, like *Hellraiser* are fantastic, like dark fairy tales.

MAM: *I was going to ask you this later, but since you brought it up — do you*

think it's a good thing that the "Slasher Films" have all but died out?
CB: Oh, yes! And may they long rest in peace! They were never great fantasy, and I found them to be completely unimaginative.
MAM: *Why'd you cast David Cronenberg for Nightbreed?*
CB: Cronenberg is a very interesting man. Very urbane and civilized. And he makes these crazy and demented movies! So I thought he'd fit the role of Decker perfectly, especially when he's beneath the mask of the serial killer. I also found it interesting to watch the contrast between David Cronenberg the movie maker and David Cronenberg the actor.
MAM: *Of all your films, Nightbreed was the biggest. Do you prefer working with the huge budget, or do you think that low-budget has its charms?*
CB: I don't think the budget was *huge*. Today, even modest films have a budget of fifteen to twenty million dollars, and *Nightbreed* was certainly nowhere near that. It was a bigger film than *Hellraiser,* and certainly had a bigger budget. I enjoyed having the larger scope for that picture.

HELLRAISER was a very small film and those limitations helped with the claustrophobic mood. So to answer that question, I'd have to say that it would depend upon the script and the story you are trying to tell. It would be very difficult to try and do *Nightbreed* on *Hellraiser's* budget. And it's very possible that *Hellraiser* wouldn't be as good on *Nightbreed's* budget.
MAM: *Well, from my own experiences in "Low Budget Land," I'd say I'd rather have the extra money. Especially when you're dealing with special effects.*
CB: Well, yes, for special effects, of course. What films did you work on?
MAM: *Street Trash? I played one of the bums.*
CB: I saw that film! It was very inventive! I liked the colors of the melting people, and the energy of the film. It was very good.
MAM: *Okay, enough about me, already. You're an accomplished artist. You've done some of the cover illustrations on your books, and you've released portfolios of your work. The question before you, Clive, is do you design characters visually before writing about them?*
CB: Always. I think that it adds life to the creatures you invent. The creative writing process begins with drawing, with the development of image. I did this for my screenplays as well. All of the *Hellraiser* and *Nightbreed* creatures were created this way. It is the way I set everything down.
MAM: *On a similar train of thought, my friend George was flipping through a*

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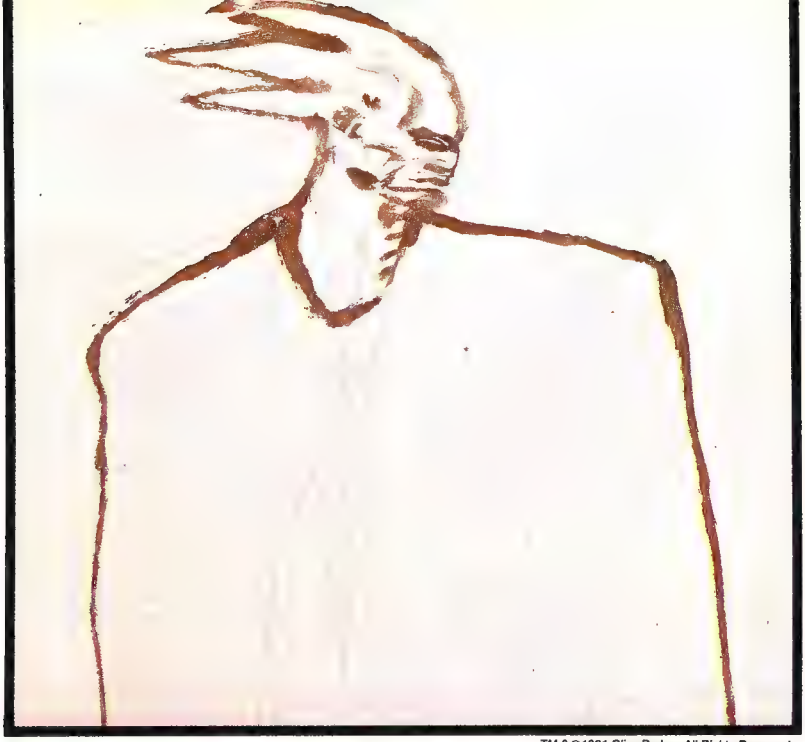

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book called Lost Magic Kingdoms, and noticed a startling similarity between Cabal's facial markings and the designs of the Maori tribesmen of New Zealand. The markings constitute a language, which tells your life story. It's actually carved into the face. Was this character, or any of your other characters, influenced by other, primitive cultures?

CB: Absolutely. It was a completely conscious effort. That's rather obscure, and I'm surprised you picked up on that. The spiral is a classic form, very symbolic. *Lost Magic Kingdoms* is a wonderful book, with beautiful photography and very informative.

So, I do look everywhere, and I do see a kind of new tribalism. You don't have to go to New Guinea to see ear, nose, and cheek piercings anymore. In Los Angeles, all you have to do is step out onto Santa Monica Blvd. to see all kinds of tattooing.

Forty years go, you wouldn't see people doing these sorts of things with their bodies, at least not in Western culture there has been an eruption of new tribal forms in our culture. It rather pleases me to see Pinhead tattoos on people's arms. It's simply more mingling of civilized images with tribalistic displays.

MAM: *The Cenobites seem to embody a bizarre, sado-masochistic fantasy. They seem to be a cross between S&M and modern primitives —*

CB: — and priests, don't forget that!

MAM: *Okay, and priests. So with the exception of the third influence, these are two sub-cultures of our society that are admittedly out of the mainstream. Why then, do you think they caught on so well in the mainstream?*

CB: Who knows? I wish I knew. I think if Wes Craven knew that Freddy Krueger was going to be so popular he wouldn't have sold the rights to him. You really can't plan on that happening. You just hope that the "cult" thing catches on.

You never really sit down and say, "I will create a character and it will be the next craze," because it simply doesn't work like that. There are so many variables to deal with, you'd simply never get anywhere.

MAM: *There have been many fantasy characters based upon real life horrors; Dracula from Vlad Tepis, and Leatherface from Ed Gein. Do you base your creations upon anything like that?*

CB: Not usually. My creatures are beings of fantasy. They usually come out of dreams in my brain, and not real-life. It's never been a route that I've gone. I do look at serial-murder cases in the news. I'm as interested in that sort of thing as anyone. We're all drawn to the darker side of humanity.

MAM: *Okay, here comes an obligatory interview question —*

CB: Where do I get my ideas?

MAM: *No, but close. There's certainly a link between erotica and horror, or sex and horror. They almost go hand in hand. Why do you think that's so?*

CB: I don't think that's so with most writers. There's no link in Stephen King's work. I really believe Steve to be the pre-eminent author in horror. But the erotic-horror link is almost non-existent in his work. So it's not inevitable.

I think it's true about *my* work. I think it's about the mind, about the body, about areas of focus. Erotica is about the body, about *transformation*. About losing control of the body, and the prob-

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lems of flesh.

MAM: *Getting back to David Cronenberg for a minute, he's often said that his films are about the body, and transformation . . .*

CB: Yes! Exactly. One of the horror cinema's great lines: It's from *Videodrome*. "Long live the New Flesh!" It's so perfect. The New Flesh will transform. A new evolutionary step is taking place. But David sees the transformation as a repulsive thing . . . revolting. In my written fiction, they enjoy or come to enjoy the transformations that happen to them. They see it as a good thing.

MAM: *Vampires have also shared that tightrope between erotic fantasies and horror, so it seems to go back a long way.*

CB: I tend to avoid that "bang on the nose" stuff. People have done it. It's not interesting to me. I've seen examples of it when it's done well, like Anne Rice's vampire novels, but generally I don't like it.

I was never really scared by vampires. Never interested. When I come to this material, I try to do what others haven't done. I try to write about the things which scare me.

MAM: *How much of what you write actually gets published?*

CB: Well, I obviously do drafts. But I seldom come to the end of a piece and decide that it's wretched. Probably 97 percent gets out there.

MAM: *Do you have a writing philosophy, like "I do 1,200 words a day!" or do you just do what comes naturally?*

CB: Yes. 2,000 to 2,500 words before I'm allowed to get up from my table. Every day, that much at least.

MAM: *Are there any writers in or out of the genre who you admire?*

CB: Well, to start, I don't feel my work is limited to simply *the genre*. I call my style of writing *Fantastique*, and it can be anything from *Alice in Wonderland* to *Moby Dick*. And I enjoy all sorts of people, most especially William Blake. *Midsummer Night's Dream*, all kinds of poetry, folklores, and fairy tales. There are hundreds of authors.

In movies, the list is also huge, from the conventional names like *Psycho, The Exorcist,* and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*. But it's important to be aware of films from other cultures as well. There are some wonderful movies out there. The Japanese have some great films, like *Kwaidan*, a ghost story. It was very influential in my teens. It's not all just men in rubber dinosaur suits smashing models.

MAM: *Well, there are a lot of those. In fact, the day you toured our Bullpen, we were watching some exploding men with rubber fly heads.*

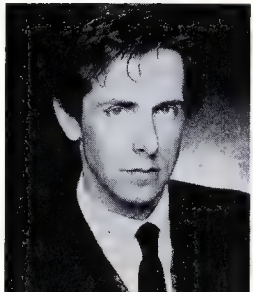
CB: Oh, that's right. Yes, well those things are wonderful, too. Another favorite is *Eyes Without a Face* by George Franju. It's a very disturbing film. It's just so important to be aware of what other cultures have to offer us.

MAM: *Finally, any words for aspiring horror novelists?*

CB: Keep it simple. Trust your imagination. Discover what is unique about your imagination. Don't simply read a story and copy it.

I go into myself. Then I transcribe what visions I have. If those ideas are original, and you are devoted, you will go far.

— Mike Lackey



DREADLANDS™

TIME-TRAVEL, DINOSAURS, ALIENS, OH MY!

"All of the Earth's natural resources have been consumed, and the world's ecosystem has collapsed under the vicious manipulation of human greed. The Earth has become a monument to man's short-sightedness and arrogance."

This is the possible future that is proposed by writers Andy Lanning and Steve White and artist Phil Gascoine in DREADLANDS — a four-issue limited series brought to you by Epic Comics.

In the year 2033, small pockets of civilization try to make the best of the Earth's remaining resources. Pestilence and plague dominate the skeletal remains of the Earth's landscape. People live in small underground cities that protect them from the savage packs of nomads that roam the lifeless topside. The only hope for humanity's survival lies in The Harvest Project!

The Harvest Project was established by UNESCO during the final days of the United Nations in order to develop means of revitalizing the Earth's dying ecology. The Harvest Project exists all over the world as small research facilities. These facilities house a small military force for security purposes, assorted researchers and scientists, administrative personnel to run the project sites, and a small number of civilians. The project sites are called SEEDs (Site for Ecological and Energy Development), and as well as being research stations, they exist as libraries that store massive amounts of human knowledge.

SEED #7 is just one of the three projects founded in the United States. Located in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, SEED #7 was built in an abandoned missile silo. Once surrounded by green forests, and cool mountain streams, the area has now become an urban wasteland infested with paramilitary Asian hordes that have crossed into North America via the Bering Straits.

Protected from the hostile forces that surround them, scientists within SEED #7 have made amazing breakthroughs. Biologists and botanists have developed several strains of plant life that can survive in the harsh above-ground environment. New power sources have been accessed by SEED #7's physicists and engineers. And most amazing of all, these energy experiments have produced a means of time-travel!

When a band of the Asian scavengers attack SEED #7, a small group of scientists and military personnel are able to escape via the untested method of time-travel. The surviving men and women of SEED #7 hope to jump a few hours forward in time in order to escape the fury of their attackers. Instead of rocketing into the future, our band of heroes open their time-sphere to find that they have blasted into the past — 150 million years into the past!

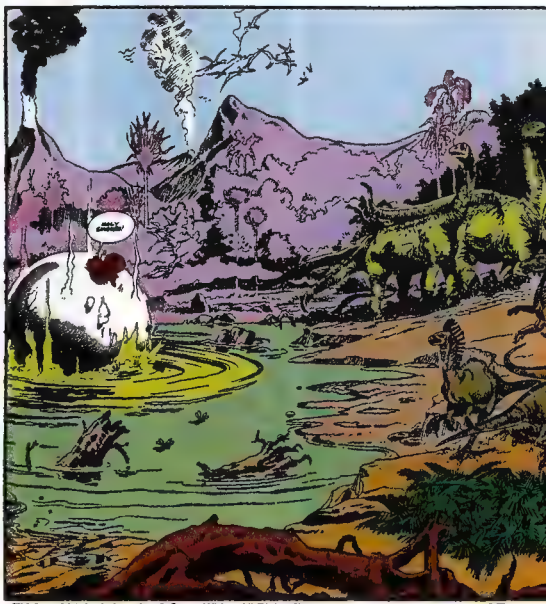
Now trapped in a world of dinosaurs, the remnants of SEED #7 once again struggle for their survival. But they are not alone! This small band of humans from the future now must face an even greater threat than the dinosaurs — Aliens!!!

Andy Lanning and Steve White are the two creators of this high-tech science fiction and time-travel extravaganza. Andy has finished a SLEEZE BROTHERS one-shot for Epic, and he is scheduled to write seven issues of THE PUNISHER next year. Also expect to see a three-part science fiction story called MUTANTS that Andy already has in the works for Epic.

As well as being a noted expert on dinosaurs, Steve is one of Marvel's UK editors. He is currently working on an illustrated history of dinosaurs for Marvel, and has also taken the time out of his very busy schedule to color all of the pages of DREADLANDS. Phil Gascoine joins both Andy and Steve as our DREADLANDS artist extraordinaire. Phil is known for his work on the daily London newspaper strip — *Young Indiana Jones*, and his comic book adaptations of *Knight Rider*, *Robin Hood* and *Indiana Jones*. This is Phil's first major project for Marvel, but we expect to see much more of his fantastic artwork in the future.

Nel Yomtov and Richard Ashford are the editorial team that have brought this project to fruition, and Nel promotes this series as, "A great blend of sci-fi, action/adventure, and dinosaurs." So if you like high-tech science ficiton, time-travel, paramilitary Asians, dinosaurs, or aliens, then DREADLANDS has something for you!

— Pat Garrahy



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Hi, EVERYONE. I'M FRED HEMBECK, AND WON'T YOU PLEASE JOIN ME IN GIVING A WARM WELCOME TO FOUR VERY SPECIAL MEN, HEROES ALL--
ALBERT CARSTAIRS!..
JOHN CUMMINGS!..
THE MAGICIAN!..
...AND JOHN WARREN AND HIS DOG SPOT!
--AND ONE DOG DON'T LOOK LIKE HEROES BECAUSE THEY'RE NOT WEARING GAUDY GET-UPS?
HEMBECK
Stan Lee PRESENTS HEMBECK
I DEFEATED OROGO, the NIGHTMARE ROBOT from OUTER SPACE!!
I ENTERED the DIMENSION of DOOM and VANQUISHED the DREADED HYPHO MONSTER!
I KNEW the SECRET of the MONSTER in the IRON MASK!
The TREACHERY of the MARTIA WHO STOLE MY BODY was EXPOSED by SPOT!

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T?
THESE
MEN~
OF!
FOLKS, I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW THAT DURING THE TIME CAPTAIN AMERICA WAS ON ICE PRINCE NAMOR HAD FORGOTTEN HE WAS THE SUB-MARINER, AND THE ANDROID TORCH WAS SWITCHED OFF, THESE FOUR MEN --AND ONE DOG-- SAVED OUR PLANET FROM DOMINATION BY ALIEN CONQUERORS!
IN THE TIME PERIOD JUST BEFORE THE FANTASTIC FOUR, THE AVENGERS AND ALL THE REST WOULD COME ALONG TO ASSUME THE EARTH PROTECTING CHORES, IT WAS THESE STALWARTS WHO SAVED OUR COLLECTIVE BUTTS!
WHAT? DON'T BELIEVE ME? WELL, JUST LISTEN TO WHAT THEY DID...

DETAILS, GENTLEMEN, DETAILS! MR. CARSTAIRS, WHY DON'T YOU START?

TO MANY, FRED, I LOOKED LIKE A TIRED, OLD GEEZER SITTING ON A PARK BENCH, MY USEFULNESS TO SOCIETY AT AN END. WHEN DROGO LANDED ON EARTH TO RECRUIT SLAVE LABOR, HIS HYPNOTIC EYE INSTANTLY PUT ALL WHO GAZED AT HIM UNDER HIS THRALL. I CHALLENGED HIM TO DO LIKEWISE WITH ME, AND WHEN HE WAS REPEATEDLY UNABLE TO DO SO, THE FRUSTRATION OF HIS FAILURE WAS SO OVERWHELMING THAT IT CAUSED THE ALIEN ROBOT TO SELF DESTRUCT! HE NEVER REALIZED HE NEVER HAD ANY HOPE OF HYPNOTIZING ME BECAUSE YOU SEE, I AM TOTALLY BLIND!

WHOA! NICE PUNCHLINE, OLD FELLA, JUST DRIPPING WITH IRONY! AND SPEAKING OF DRIPS, JOHN, WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

OKAY, SO MOST FOLKS THINK OF ME AS A PAIN IN THE BUTT INSKI TEENAGER WHO ASKS TOO MANY QUESTIONS, BUT IF I HADN'T BEEN QUIZZING THOSE CONSTRUCTION WORKERS DIGGING THAT HOLE THAT FATEFUL DAY WE'D ALL BE DANCING TO THE DIMENSION OF DOOM'S TUNE! Y'SEE, THE WORKER'S GRUFF REBUFF INTENSIFIED MY CURIOUSITY, SO WHEN I SPIED ON THEM, I WAS SHOCKED TO FIND OUT THAT THEY WERE BUILDING A PASSAGEWAY TO ANOTHER DIMENSION! WELL, I FOLLOWED 'EM IN, BUT THEY SOON DISCOVERED ME, AND, IN AN ATTEMPT TO PREVENT ME FROM WARNING THE WORLD OF THEIR INVASION PLANS, THEY SICCED THEIR HYPNO MONSTER ON ME! NOT BEING BLIND LIKE MR. CARSTAIRS HERE, I INSTEAD GRABBED A PIECE OF CRYSTAL AND TURNED THE MONSTERS' POWERFUL RAYS BACK UPON HIMSELF. I QUICKLY FLED, USING A STEAMROLLER TO DESTROY THE GATEWAY ONCE I'D RETURNED HOME. AND YOU KNOW WHAT A COP CAUGHT ME AND TRIED TO RUN ME IN FOR VANDALISM! THE ONLY THING THAT SAVED ME WAS HE HAD TO WAIT FOR THE CONSTRUCTION COMPANY TO FILE A COMPLAINT, AND FOLKS, THEY WEREN'T COMING BACK! GEEZ, SOME THANKS, I'LL TELL YA...

HEY, NO ONE EVER SAID BEING A TEENAGER WAS EASY. IN FACT, IT'S QUITE A TRICK, WHICH BRINGS US TO OUR NAMELESS PRESTIDIGITATOR...

MY WORK AS A STAGE MAGICIAN WAS GOING UNAPPRECIATED WHEN THE MONSTER IN THE IRON MASK LANDED ON EARTH. SEEING HE HAD COME TO ANNOUNCE YET ANOTHER FORTHCOMING INVASION, AND HE BOASTED THAT NOTHING COULD STOP HIM, SAVE A GAS ATTACK, WHICH HE CLAIMED TO BE SAFE FROM AS LONG AS HE WORE HIS IRON MASK. AND INDEED, THE AUTHORITIES TRIED EVERYTHING ELSE--EVEN AN ATOMIC BOMB-- BUT NOTHING COULD STOP HIM! FINALLY, IT OCCURRED TO ME THAT HE WAS USING THE EVER TRUSTY MAGICIAN'S TRICK OF MISDIRECTION--THAT WAS NO MASK, YOU SEE, THAT WAS HIS FACE! WHEN THE ARMY, AT MY URGING, THREATENED TO USE THE GAS HE'D CONNED EVERYONE INTO BELIEVING WOULDN'T WORK ON HIM, HE QUICKLY LEFT, RATHER THAN, YOU SHOULD EXCUSE THE EXPRESSION, FACE IT! HOW SWEET-- I HAD SAVED OUR WORLD, BUT BEST OF ALL, MORE PEOPLE BEGAN COMING TO MY MAGIC SHOWS!

TERRIFIC JOB! AND JUST IMAGINE HOW MANY MORE FOLKS WOULD'VE SHOWED UP IF YOU'D ONLY GIVEN YOUR NAME OUT! AND WHILE WE'RE ON THE SUBJECT OF MIXED UP IDENTITIES...

SPOT AND I WERE WALKING IN THE WOODS, MINDING OUR OWN BUSINESS, WHEN SUDDENLY, ZETORA, A MARTIAN FUGITIVE, LANDS HIS SPACECRAFT RIGHT SMACK DAB IN FRONT OF US! WELL, SIR, BEFORE I EVEN KNEW WHAT HAD HAPPENED, THAT GOL-DURNED MONSTER HAD SWITCHED BODIES WITH ME! AND YOU KNOW WHAT? NOBODY BUT NOBODY WOULD BELIEVE MY STORY, NOT MY NEIGHBORS, AND CERTAINLY NOT THE POLICE! IT WASN'T UNTIL ZETORA FOOLISHLY SHOWED UP IN MY BODY TO TAUNT ME THAT THE TIDES FINALLY BEGAN TO TURN. OH, HE STILL MANAGED TO FOOL ALL THE PEOPLE, BUT HE COULDN'T FOOL GOOD OL' SPOT, NOSIRREE BOB! SPOT USED HIS CANINE SNIFFER TO FIGURE OUT WHO WAS WHO, AND SOON THE POLICE REALIZED THEIR MISTAKE. WELL, SIR, THEY FORCED THAT SNEAKY ALIEN TO SWITCH OUR MINDS BACK TO WHERE THEY RIGHTFULLY BELONGED, AND THEN TOOK THE SPACEMAN INTO SOME SORT OF PROTECTIVE CUSTODY. MY DOG SPOT, WELL, HE SURE DID GIVE THAT MARTIAN ONE HECKUVA A TIME! WHAT KIND OF A TIME? SPOT, HOWSABOUT YOU DESCRIBE IT FOR US?...

RUFF!

GOOD DOGGY!

AND THANKS TO ALL YOU GOOD MEN FOR SHARING WITH US YOUR TALES OF HEROISM, YOUR TALES OF COURAGE, YOUR TALES OF WONDER, YOUR TALES THAT JUST MIGHT BE A BIT HARD TO BELIEVE-- IF WE HADN'T GOTTEN THEM ON GOOD AUTHORITY BY READING THEM IN A COMIC BOOK!

THESE ARE BUT A FEW OF THE FOLKS WHO KEPT THIS WORLD FREE OF ALIEN ENSLAVEMENT IN THE YEARS BEFORE THE FANTASTIC FOUR LAUNCHED THE MARVEL UNIVERSE. BACK THEN, MANY AN ORDINARY PERSON ACTED EXTRAORDINARILY. HOW ELSE DOES ONE EXPLAIN THE VANQUISHMENT OF MOOMBA? OF MORILLA? OF MONSTROLLO? OF GRUTO, GROOT, GORGOLLA AND GORGO? WHAT ABOUT TIM BOO BA? FOR GOSH SAKES, WHAT ABOUT GOOM? AND, HEAVEN HELP US, GOOGAM, SON OF GOOM???...

MANY OF THESE AVERAGE FOLKS WHO CONQUERED THESE FEARSOME CREATURES ARE STILL QUIETLY WALKING AROUND THE MARVEL UNIVERSE, CONTENT TO BLEND INTO THE BACKGROUND CROWDS WHILE THE CENTER STAGE IS FOCUSED ON THE SOMEWHAT MORE COLORFUL ADVENTURERS (SUPER HEROES, IN CASE YOU DON'T KNOW).

BUT, WELL, THINGS BEING THE WAY THEY ARE THESE DAYS, WE'D ALL BETTER KEEP AN EYE OUT! FACT IS, THE NEXT TIME YOU SEE AN INNOCENT BYSTANDER CAUGHT IN A FIREFIGHT BETWEEN THE PUNISHER AND THE MOB, SHOW A LITTLE CONCERN FOR HIS SAFETY!

WHO KNOWS? THERE'S A REAL GOOD CHANCE THAT THAT ANONYMOUS CHARACTER COULD EASILY HAVE BEEN THE MAN WHO STOPPED

ZZUTAK.

THE WORST MENACE THE WORLD HAS EVER KNOWN!!

...AND THAT SHOULD GET A PERSON SOME RESPECT, DON'TCHA THINK?...

Mark-head by Kevin Kobasic

Whenever I do a column about some aspect of breaking into the comics industry, boy, do I get mail. If there's a subject that a goodly portion of the reading audience is extremely receptive as well as sensitive to, that's the one. It's always been my intent to demystify such things as the hazy boundary between Us (the pros) and You, to give you the kind of straight talk I'd have sold my appendix for when I was You and wanted to become Us. I like to think of myself as the Penn & Teller of the comics industry, showing you how all the "tricks" are done even as I do them. And just as P&T get a lot of heat for, shall we say, their attitude , so too do I. You see, while I think I come across as an earnest explainer of hidden truths, several correspondents tell me I come across as a self-satisfied bureaucrat of meager abilities who takes delight in discouraging hot, fresh, young talent from entering the field for fear they'll show me up and steal all my writing assignments. When I get letters like that, it makes me wonder why I bother at first. Then I think of how frustrated I felt when I was on the outside looking in and I can at least relate to the emotional climate at their creative cores. So, I continue to write about what I would have wanted to know back when I was an outsider.

Let me address the negative description of me in the first paragraph for a moment. (You just knew I couldn't let that slide by without comment, right?) Am I self-satisfied? Yes, I'm conscientious about my work (both staffwork as Exec Ed of Marvel and my freelance writing work) and it makes me feel satisfied way deep down inside when I do it. Am I a bureacrat? Guess so — Marvel's organizational structure places me under the heading of "management." Do I have meager abilities? That's for you readers to decide by consensus (I've never seen my name near the top of the Favorite Writer polls) but I do believe if my abilities are meager, I know how to make the most of them. Do I take delight in discouraging new talent? No! Marvel constantly needs new creative soldiers to jump into the monthly trenches and help the company wage war against blank pages and deadlines and bad entertainment. Am I afraid of new guys being so good they'll steal all my work from me? No, I think there's plenty of work to go around. Marvel is publishing almost three times the amount of material it was when I started back in 1978 — I managed to get work then, I manage to get work now, and if in the future what I produce is not good enough for Marvel, I hope they have the good sense to stop using me. I'll find someplace else to write since it's something I've got to do, whether I'm paid for it or not.

Okay, so I say I don't delightfully discourage new talent, but do I do anything to encourage them? Well, other than the pithy tips I try to provide in this column from time to time or the occasional portfolio review I do at a convention, no. I don't do much. Know why? It's not my job. What my job entails is a subject too big for this single paragraph — suffice to say that it has more to do with managing the editors who manage our talent pool of creative persons than finding and developing those creative persons myself. So if not me, does Marvel actively develop promising new talent? Only at a certain point.

Our submissions editor (a post that rotates every few months so I dare not even provide his name here since the info will soon be obsolete — just send all your inquiries to "Submissions Editor" and whoever it is will get it) separates the one percent from the ninety-nine percent who despite whatever talent or effort they may demonstrate are not ready for professional work. Our Editors (at last count there were fifteen) then work with this one percent and develop them when there is need for new blood on old books.

Another correspondent wrote me to take me to task for this policy. He said, and I paraphrase, "Doesn't Marvel owe it to the talent, to the audience, and to itself as a profit-making business, to develop more than this one percent, to develop everyone who shows talent or promise?" The answer is no. In a more perfect world, everyone with potential would have that potential nurtured by those whose potential in a certain area (say, comic book making) was highly developed (professionals in that field). But. . .there are so many of you and so few of us proportionately, this is not possible. We have to be selective. But isn't our selectivity process costing us scores of creative people who might be good at comic books if only they were given encouragement? I've said this before, I'll say it again: Anyone who really wants to get into comics and has even some ability at it *will get in*. We are *not* missing out on the next Walt Simonson or Frank Miller by our too rigorous screening process. Guys like Walt and Frank have so much drive (as well as so much native ability) that we could have made the screening process *anything* and they still would have found some way to get through it so they could do comics. I have some evidence on this score.

Once upon a time there was a young artist named Jim Lee. He sent his samples in to Marvel to the Submissions Editor who was at that time Howard Mackie. Howard sent them back with the usual form rejection letter. Why? They weren't good enough to make the cut into that one percent of ready for professional work. End of story? Not quite. As you may know, Jim didn't let this rejection get him down. He practiced and drew and drew some more. Next time he submitted his work (years later) it was good enough. Where is Jim today? Drawing X-MEN, the best selling comic in America. And what does Jim think of Marvel's Submissions Editor rejecting his first batch of samples? He admits they stunk. Moral of story: you tell me.

I don't believe it's Marvel's responsibility to develop drawing and writing potential any more than it's a film studio's responsibility to develop acting or directing potential. A film studio's responsibility is to make good pictures, the kind the audience wants to see. To do those things, both industries need professional caliber talent. It is the responsibility of those individuals with potential, be it drawing, writing, acting, or directing, to develop that potential into professional-level skills and abilities. The world owes nobody a living in the field of their choosing — you owe it to the world to develop your potential in some area so you can make an achievement in the field of your choosing. I believe this strongly.

Now then, onto the matter at hand. Every other column for the past few months, I've been working with one Jean-Jacques Dzialowski on his plot submissions. As I've pointed out before, this is a most unusual circumstance, a luxury that few if any other writers in Jean-Jacques' position are afforded (Jean-Jacques was chosen at random), and I primarily do it so you might see how an editorial mind might examine a submission. This time out, we have a third plot for our perusal. The text for the five-pager follows in bold face, after which I'll be back in non-bold face to give my critique. Take it away, Jean-Jacques. . .

Plot for 5 pages featuring SPIDER-MAN
"Smashing Party"

"Que desiderat pacem, praeparet bellum"
"Let him who desires peace prepare for war"
VEGETIUS, De Re Militari.

1: Horizontal panel across the top of the page representing the world-famous Avenue des Champs-Elysées indicates that the action is taking place in Paris, France. A second horizontal panel focusing on the American Em-

bassy located behind the aforementioned Avenue, next to the Place de la Concorde, makes it clear that the drama will actually unfold inside the walls of the four-storied mansion, which is being hastily surrounded by the police force.

We should see the police guards scurrying around while a C.R.S. Commando (short for Compagnie Républicaine de Sécurité, the Republican Troops in charge of Public Security, France's counter-terrorist unit) are plotting their assault on the embassy, which has been invaded by six men belonging to the terrorist organization known as the Underground Liberated Totally Integrated Mobile Army To Unite Mankind-ULTIMATUM. As far as is known, their leader is apparently the American criminal former Frightful Four member Peter Petruski, better known as the Trapster. A large number of people, diplomats and others, are being held hostage and the event, which occurs at the end of a sunny morning, has attracted the people from the Press and Television.

The rest of the page is a big powerful establishing shot of Spider-Man holding onto a webline and kicking the Trapster in the face. It should be done in such a way as to have a front view of both the characters' costumes to immediately introduce their outlook and specific features, consequently defining who is who. This takes place in a large room inside the embassy.

2: Spider-Man lands safely between the hostages (who keep back at the far end of the room) and the Trapster, now lying down helplessly (back to Spidey), who is astounded to find the wall-crawler in Paris. Close in on the Trapster's grimacing face as he remembers that after his defeat at the hands of the web-spinner a while back, he decided to leave the United States because he thought the place was crowded with too many so-called super heroes for his comfort. He retreated to Paris where he thought he could easily gain money without any hero barring the way and thus make up for all his past defeats.

But it seems that the web-slinger keeps coming back to haunt him. The Trapster, on the brink of insanity, turns back and tries to paste up Spidey with his right wrist shooter. Easily dodging the blast thanks to his danger-warning Spider-sense and superhuman reflexes, Spidey uses his web-shooters to clog his opponent's blasters and punches him out for the count.

As Spidey goes to free the hostages, he suddenly turns his head towards us as his spider-sense starts tingling. We should see behind him the hostages' faces, on which one can see relief turning into initial fear.

3: The real mastermind behind this daring action is now revealing himself: The Flag-Smasher, accompanied by three ULTIMATUM members, points

a machine-gun at the hostages and threatens to kill one of them if Spidey does not surrender immediately. The latter, as the responsible man he is, has no other choice than comply with the Smasher's order. Two ULTIMATUM guards hold Spidey in check, pointing their machine guns at him while the third one points his at the hostages to discourage any attempt by Spider-Man to go against the Smasher's will. Close in on the Smasher's face as he explains to Spidey his intention to reach world peace and unity through revolutionary violence.

But this goal cannot be achieved without money, which Smasher is precisely lacking now, having spent all his father's inheritance to finance and improve his vast organization (unknowingly on behalf of the Red Skull, who truly masterminded ULTIMATUM) over its few years of existence. As a consequence of his repeated failures, the parties which originally supplied him with his weaponry arsenal refused to lend him the money necessary to prepare for a *grand coup détat* that would make up for the errors of the past.

Anyway, Smasher, devised a cunning scheme to get the money he needed while carrying out his grand coup at the same time. Resorting to insider help, he invaded the embassy to hold the diplomats hostage and ask a large amount of money for their liberation. Getting it, he and his group would go innocently out (without their outfits) passing as the first freed hostages while someone would stay inside to make the police believe the terrorists to be still in the place. Someone foolish enough to accept the role. The Trapster would be that person, the colorful figure one would easily take for leader.

Just like Smasher, Trapster was defeated by the American Sentinel of Liberty, Captain America. (This is why Smasher chose to attack the embassy of his former opponent's country.)

Smasher would use the unsuspecting Trapster as a bait, leaving him to his fate while he and his group (among which is a woman who would simulate pregnancy as a means to get the money secretly out) would safely get out. Also, in one same stroke, Smasher would rob all the top secret papers he would find, to dismantle or cripple international intelligence services. Finally, upon leaving, they would detonate a time bomb to destroy the embassy.

This guy's a real nutcase! Spidey thinks, knowing only a small part of the whole stratagem. It wasn't exactly the idea of enjoying my stay in Paris I had in mind! Spidey briefly recaps that Peter Parker, his alter-ego, was sent to the French Capital City to take photographs for the Daily Bugle, the Newspaper for which he is working as a freelance photographer in New York. I'll decide your fate later, Smasher says. Suddenly, all the lights in the room are turned off. One guard goes to investigate. (Consequently, a single guard is now keeping Spidey under surveillance.)

4: As Bruce Springsteen would say, let's go dancing in the dark, Spidey thinks. Getting rid of his watchdog, he jumps on the ceiling.

As the lights gradually come back, one can see two figures emerging out of darkness.

Holding his smoking stun-gun in his left hand, the mercenary known as the Paladin makes a well-timed entrance, dragging behind him the (gun-stunned) guard who kept an eye on the hostages.

The infrared lenses contained in his helmet enabled him to make his way into the darkness into which he plunged the room seconds ago. Close in on the Paladin's face as he coldly watches the Smasher standing before him.

Possessing super-strength, Paladin easily throws the guard on the Smasher who falls down, having no time to dodge the body.

While Smasher is momentarily incapacitated, Spidey leads the hostages out of the room as Paladin tells him that all the rest of the terrorist group has been put out of combat. At that moment, the Trapster comes around and succeeds in entrapping Spidey, who heeds the warning of his spider-sense too late, being busy with the hostages, who show a clean pair of heels. A thick paste ring is crushing Spidey's body.

5: Paladin's superhuman reaction time enables him to stun-gun the Trapster while handling the attack of the Smasher and his spiked mace, though losing his gun in the process. They turn to hand-to-hand combat (Paladin is highly proficient in unarmed combat and gymnastics, while Smasher is a master of karate), till the Smasher grabs Paladin's gun to fire it, in vain, for the gun is equipped with a secret safety-catch, so that only Paladin can operate it.

While throwing it at Paladin, Smasher uses his tear gas gun on him.

Paladin activates a belt-control to slide down his face plate, making his helmet airtight. Go closer and closer on Spidey as he struggles to break the solid paste, and succeeds. Leaping near Smasher, he punches him with a blow that sends Smasher crashing in the far end of the room, totally knocked out, thus marking the end of the battle.

We then find the two heroes outside the embassy, as they leave the bad guys under the French Police's custody. Paladin finally says that he was hired by an unrevealed party to apprehend the Smasher. In order to do so, he infiltrated Smasher's small terrorist unit and went with them into the embassy.

As they stand ready to go their separate ways, Paladin says his mission here is completed, that there are still other matters to take care of. He smiles and adds I love it so when a plan comes together!

"Peace hath her victories no less renowned than war."
John Milton, To Cromwell

I'm back. Take a bow, Jean-Jacques . . . this is your best effort yet. I had no problem with your characterizations or motivations of Spider-Man, Paladin, Trapster, or the Flag-Smasher (a character near and dear to my heart, since he's one of my babies). Furthermore, your story structure was pretty straightforward and free of any superfluous elements.

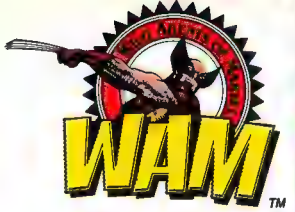
The only real problem with it is this: you've got too much story for five pages. To get all your story into five pages, an artist would probably have to resort to ten-panel pages or leave a lot out. As a matter of fact, folks, Jean-Jacques sent in pencil samples of this self-same plot to demonstrate his penciling prowess and to fit it himself he had to use 8 to 13 panel pages. This is way too crowded, pal. The penciler half of you would curse the writer half for making you have to do so much work just to fit the stuff all in; the writer half of you would curse the artist half for leaving you absolutely no room to write copy (word balloons and captions). I'm tempted to just say "Okay, you can have two more pages to give the plot some breathing room," but since your assignment was to fit a 5-page slot, to give you special dispensation like that would be counterproductive. Professionals do their work according to the specifications provided by their editor, and aspiring professionals should learn to do likewise.

So you have to cut something from the story to give it elbow room. But what? Let's see if it's possible to simplify the plot itself. What you have in a nutshell is this: A hostage situation at an embassy apparently instigated by the Trapster, Spider-Man intervenes, nails the Trapster but gets captured by the true instigator, Flag-Smasher, is rescued by Paladin, the two of them resolve the hostage situation by smashing Flag-Smasher. Even boiled down like this it sounds like a lot for 5 pages. Know why? You've got four major story characters (two protagonists, two antagonists) to deal with in a mere 5 pages. That's a page and a change apiece. That alone is not impossible to deal with. The latest 5-pager I did for CAPTAIN AMERICA has three protagonists and three antagonists — six in 5 pages. What I didn't have that your story had to contend with is separate introduction scenes for two of the four characters. In my three-on-three tussle, we were introduced to the three antagonists and two protagonists in the first few panels, and a third protagonist merits a separate introductory passage a page or so later. In yours, a protagonist (Spider-Man) and antagonist (Trapster) are introduced in the first few panels, but it takes two separate scenes, full of exposition, to introduce the remaining two characters. That may be a bit more exposition than a 5-pager can bear.

What I would do to decongest the story then is dump somebody, one of the characters. My suggestion would be one of the protaganists (Spider-Man or Paladin) because 1) If the villains outnumber the heroes, it makes the hero's struggle to win seem a bit more heroic, and 2) You tease the reader with something you resolve with a bit of a cheat. When Spider-Man is thrown in with the hostages, I think "Uh-oh, Spidey's in bad trouble. How the heck is he going to get out of this one?" The answer to that question the reader in me posed to you was: He doesn't. He doesn't get out using any of his wits or powers. He's rescued — by someone we didn't even know was in the story until the point at which he was needed to rescue Spider-Man from a situation apparently he could not have gotten out of himself. It's a bit of a cheat to set up an interesting situation which causes the reader to try to figure out how he'd get out of it were he Spider-Man then rob the reader of seeing how closely his solution matched the one Spider-Man uses by having someone come in out of the blue and rescue Spider-Man. So am I saying, kick Paladin out of there, and let's see Spider-Man resolve the whole situation on his own? You could, or you could kick Spider-Man out and let's see Paladin, a guy with less power than Spider-Man, do the same. Either way, we'd have a lot more challenging story and one that might fit into 5 pages more easily.

So, Jean-Jacques, take another pass through "Smashing Party" and eliminate one of the protagonists (your choice) and resubmit for my next critique. Hey, we'll get onto the next phase, the penciling stage, yet! And to whet all your appetites, illustrating this column is work by aspiring artist, Gerald Teon Walker, the guy we've randomly chosen to illustrate Jean-Jacque's tale once we whip it into drawable shape. Some nice looking stuff, Gerald, but we've yet to see how you can tell a story. You'll get your turn, pal.

— Mark Gruenwald



Surely to be remembered as one of the world-shaking events of 1991 is the creation of Wild Agents of Marvel, the first official Marvel Fan Club since the halcyon days of FOOM. MARVEL AGE tracked down WAM Coordinator Dwight Zimmerman amongst his many meetings and convention appearances, and asked these burning questions:

MAM: *What's new about WAM, compared to the previous Official fan clubs (Merry Marvel Marching Society, Friends of Ol' Marvel)?*

DZ: Over the years, when people have asked when Marvel would create a fan club we said, "Marvel has done so much which was innovative over the years, we have to think of something just as innovative for the fan club." We think we've found it with WAM; we've found a way of bringing the fans closer to us.

MAM: *Do you have an example?*

DZ: We are going to be offering coupons for free things through WAM. Members will be able to get $25.00 worth of coupons which can be applied against comics, trade paperback, graphic novels, and a variety of Marvel merchandise. We're not talking "cents off. . .we're talking about things you can walk away with, free! We will be keying these to new projects, helping us to spotlight some great new stuff. We're excited to start offering these in the next WAM newsletter.

MAM: *How have the fans reacted so far?*

DZ: They're ecstatic! The Whilce Portacio print (seen here), which WAM members received in their initial WAM membership kits, has received a tremendous response. As a result, every year we will be offering new prints done by noted artists as part of that year's membership packet. It's sure to be a valuable collector's item.

MAM: *How can members stay up to date on what's coming up?*

DZ: Read the quarterly WAM Bulletin! Not only do members get complete club updates, but we'll be revealing exclusive insider information. The first issue brought word of a major new storyline, and WAM members were the first to know.

MAM: *How do you decide what to offer?*

DZ: As Marvel gets bigger, we get even more sensitive to what our fans want. We invite the fans to tell us what they want, what they'd like to see, even bring them in (in select situations) as part of the decision-making process.

MAM: *Is there an example of that coming up?*

DZ: A good example is the 900-line, on which WAM members will make decisions about characters and titles. We'll be coordinating with the editorial department to ask members their opinions about new titles, costume changes, new powers. . .we'll be looking at all manner of things. WAM will give members an organized opportunity to let us know.

In addition to that, we are looking at ways to make membership fun for them. Why belong to a fan club if it isn't going to be fun? In addition to the really neat membership kit, which will have lots of things in it, and which they can use to contact us (using the great stationery kit). When we see official WAM stationery, we know that the person sending it is a commited Marvel fan, one who really is active.

MAM: *Many fans will want to keep their membership packets intact. Can they get more stationery supplies?*

DZ: Yes. We offer more stationery for sale because we hope that WAM members will be writing to us an awful lot! When they run out, they can always buy more; it's always going to be there. I can understand a collector wanting to set aside the packet for safekeeping, but that's not the purpose of the stationery; we want people to write back to us.

MAM: *What other activities will there be?*

DZ: WAM Headquarters are really the key to the WAM fan club. They'll be where WAM members can pick up the free stuff that we'll be offering periodically. They're the best place to get the widest variety of Marvel materials, so comic stores seemed to be the natural place to try to turn into the meeting place for hardcore Marvel fans.

MAM: *Will the stores have regular meetings, then?*

DZ: We are encouraging initiative on the part of the WAM Headquarters managers. We don't want to lay down rules and guidelines, because we want the fans to shape this into what they want. We're waiting for them to tell us what they need. In a fan club, you expect a kit, you expect a newsletter, you expect some exclusive items, but we want to go beyond that; this is a fans' fan club, so we're looking forward to learning what they want. If they feel they're getting it, they'll go beyond their one-year membership and keep renewing year after year.

MAM: *Some people sent applications months before the kits were ready. What did they get for registering early?*

DZ: A low membership number. It proves to their friends that they saw a good thing first.

To be continued next month!

GREAT MOMENTS IN MARVEL® HISTORY

Welcome to the first installment of a new feature that explores the wild and the wacky in the world of Marvel. Each month (or thereabouts), we'll be poking fun at memorable moments from Marvel's past, as we stroll and trip) down Memory Lane, spotting trends, pointing out colossal goofs, and generally dredging up stuff most people wish we had forgotten about!

This month, we look at the Incredible Melting Iron Man. It's a fact — Iron Man has melted more times than any other hero . . . at least, on the cover of his own mag! (When one of your main bad guys is called the Melter, I guess that's one of the occupational hazards!) Considering the amount of heat required to melt iron, that's really got to be pretty painful for poor Tony Stark, stuck inside that armor! Maybe they should have called him Wax-Man, judging by how he used to drip like a candle! Iron Man used to attract a lot of fire-powered villains — among them, Sun-Fire, Firebrand, and Raja, Son of Fire! He tends to stay away from guys like that these days!

— *"Big Born-on-the-Bayou" Barry Dutter*

THE INVINCIBLE IRON MAN
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
FOOL! YOU'RE NOT THE CONTROLLER!
THE CONTROLLER STRIKES!
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! HE'S MELTING LIKE A CANDLE!!
FIREBRAND STRIKES AGAIN!
KALS!
THIS ISSUE — SHELL-HEAD PUTS IT ALL TOGETHER!
THE FURY OF INFERNO!
ACTION
BURN, HERO... BURN!
MEMBER
SAD WAY TO GO, NO ONE
AH, MON, MELTS LIKE WAX — FLESH RUNS LIKE WATER
THE LIVING VOLCANO!

THE FIRST ANNUAL MARVEL® PICNIC

The week of August 23, 1991 will be remembered for many things. The Hardliners took a major defeat in their attempted coup in the Soviet Union . . . Sgt. Slaughter took a beating in *SummerSlam* at Madison Square Garden . . . and Marvel Comics had its first annual company picnic on the lovely West Side of New York's Central Park.

It was a gorgeous day, and well over one hundred Marvel staffers were in attendance, from the company president to our esteemed Bullpenners. Custom made shirts were ordered just for the occasion, featuring Spidey, the Hulk, Daredevil, Punisher, Silver Surfer, Iron Man and Wolverine, with a logo designed by Evan Skolnick and realized by staffer Jon *(Billy the Mountain)* Babcock. Photographer Elliot Brown was also on hand to catch these great shots of what people who make comic books look like when they're eating Dunkin Donuts, guzzling soda, and having water fights.

Play time was the rule of the day, as the volleyball net was erected by 10:30 a.m. and the first games began in earnest. Staffers were playing with *"Argentinean*

From Top to Bottom: Marveloids enjoy a fast-paced volleyball game, Marvel President Terry Stewart keeps the staffers enthralled with another thrilling story, Marvel Editor-in-Chief Tom DeFalco offers his seat to Millie Shuriff, and a sweeping overview of the festivities.

Rules," which aficionados will recognize as a subtle variation on the *"Aborigine Rules."* Injuries were kept to a minimum, with the noted exception of this reporter.

The other popular time-killer till the food arrived was *(what started out to be)* touch football. Epic Assistant Editor Tom Daning was gentleman enough to supply pigskin, and the teams, which started out small, soon burst with up to fifteen players per side. Even though things got a little rough, our super hero-makin' guys pulled through without a scratch.

Baseball and softball were enjoyed on one of the two fields we had for the day, and Marvel's Art Director, John

From Top to Bottom: John Romita pitches a mean fastball, Stat-man Rob Carosella is up at bat, Epic Executive Editor Carl Potts in pitched water-fight combat, and the food arrives — a super hero!

Romita pitched a mean fastball. Frisbee golf and just plain lying in the sun with a good book were other popular choices.

Finally, the food came, several six foot long *hero* sandwiches, the irony of which was lost on no one. After the serious chowing was completed, everyone enjoyed the weather, gossipped, and looked forward to the fast approaching weekend.

All in all, the picnic was a huge success, and plans are already afoot for next year's bash! You can bet, that rain or shine, MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE will be there!

— Mike Lackey

From Top to Bottom: Dave Wohl, Renee Witterstaetter and Marie Javins get a piece of the rock, Tom DeFalco looks for the last donut, Mike Lackey lies crumpled after a severe volleyball-related injury, and Marvel staffers enjoy the gloriously sunny day.

1985 PART II THE MARVEL® AGE OF COMICS 1985 PART II

Limited Series were all the rage in 1985, and the grandfather of them all, MARVEL SUPER-HEROES SECRET WARS, was coming to its climactic conclusion! With Dr. Doom usurping both the power of Galactus and the enigmatic Beyonder, even Marvel's mightiest heroes stood little chance of survival! But when the Beyonder took back his power and returned the heroes to Earth, that wasn't the end. . .not for someone with the Beyonder's sales figures!

Mere months later, then, the Beyonder came to Earth himself in SECRET WARS II. But where the previous series ran for a year, with its continuity inserted between two months of 1984, the new series would run for nine months, each month crossing over with different Marvel titles.

In his human form, the Beyonder sought to understand the nature of desire. He learned about courage from Captain America (even copying Cap's body for himself), and about sickness from Rick Jones (curing the eternal sidekick of cancer). He learned about love from Dazzler, and about evil from the Hate-Monger. But why, you might ask, didn't he take the time to learn about shopping malls from Boom-Boom, the irrepressible mutant who made her debut appearance in SECRET WARS II?

Then as now, movie adaptations accounted for a fair share of Marvel Limited Series, as the House of Ideas presented their four-color versions of 2010: THE DAY WE MAKE CONTACT, THE ADVENTURES OF BUCKAROO BANZAI (with art by Mark Texeira), CONAN THE DESTROYER, THE MUPPETS TAKE MANHATTAN, SHEENA OF THE JUNGLE (art by Gray Morrow), RED SONJA, and DUNE (art by Bill Sinkiewicz). All of these adaptations were also presented on high-gloss paper stock in MARVEL COMICS SUPER SPECIAL.

Marvel archivists had special reason to rejoice in 1985—besides the appearance of THE MARVEL SAGA and the Deluxe Edition of the OFFICIAL HANDBOOK TO THE MARVEL UNIVERSE (which we mentioned last month), two more Limited Series provided detailed, issue-by-issue information of Marvel's greatest comics. Historian George Olshevsky, who had worked independently for years, teamed up with Marvel to produce the OFFICIAL MARVEL INDEX TO THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN, and the OFFICIAL MARVEL INDEX TO THE FANTASTIC FOUR. These timeless pieces of research provide the last word in Marvel Universe statistics. And for nostalgia buffs who wanted fully illustrated trips down memory lane, the Baxter-paper LIFE OF CAPTAIN MARVEL presented Jim Starlin's immortal tales of the first protector of the cosmos and his war against redoubtable Thanos.

The primary appeal of the Limited Series, though, has always been the chance to give neglected characters or teams the chance to become stars, and to satisfy fan cravings for unique adventures that may not fit into a normal monthly series. For example, KITTY PRYDE AND WOLVERINE (which concluded in 1985) featured two of the most popular X-Men in a unique story that would have occupied six whole issues of the mutants' regular book. Logan invaded the Japanese underworld to free Kitty from the psychic possession of the demon ninja, Ogun. He succeeded, of course, but Ogun's legacy stayed with Kitty, reshaping her from the cute, spunky Ariel into the formidable Shadowcat.

Other mutants received the Limited Series focus as well. ICEMAN starred in a saga by J. Marc DeMatteis, pitting Bobby Drake against Kali and the nemesis known as Oblivion. NIGHTCRAWLER swashbuckled his way through adventures written and drawn by his co-creator Dave Cockrum, in a fantasy dimension ruled by the evil sorcerer, Shagreen! Long before Linda Hamilton and Ron Perlman on CBS, Alison Blaire and Hank McCoy starred as BEAUTY AND THE BEAST, in a 4-part Ann Nocenti epic—compelled into an unlikely romance, Dazzler and the Beast fought against the evil of the Mutant Theatre, and solved the mystery of Doctor Doom's son.

Merchandising tie-ins led to other Limited Series: the STARRIORS portrayed the saga of beneficent robots, the Protectors, searching throughout the cosmos for the home of Man, and outwitting the malevolent race of robots called the Destructors. SECTAURS, like STARRIORS, also came from the pen of Bill Mantlo, and featured another team of toy characters fighting for their lives against the evil Spidrax. And concluding its run QUESTPROBE, the Limited Series that tied in with computer games as Marvel heroes found their mettle tested by the enigmatic Chief Examiner.

Another Limited Series finishing its run was MACHINE MAN, the acclaimed tale by Tom DeFalco and Barry Windsor-Smith that's recently been reprinted as

a Marvel trade paperback. Aaron Stack, X-51, teamed up with Gears Garvin and his post-modern friends against Sunset Bain and the Iron Man of 2020.

And just as Machine Man frolicked in the future, Solomon Kane played in the past. Writer Ralph Macchio and artists Steve Carr and Bret Blevins spun a macabre saga of Robert E. Howard's Puritan hero, battling menaces both physical and supernatural amid the wilds of Africa.

Two super-teams received 12-part maxi-series as part of Marvel's summer comics explosion. THE ETERNALS waged war against Lor Ghaur of the Deviants, while discovering new mysteries surrounding the Celestials, in a worlds-spanning adventure by Peter Gillis and Sal Buscema. And the Mark Gruenwald/Bob Hall team employed the SQUADRON SUPREME to answer one of the ultimate questions about superheroes: what if they used their powers to make the world better — by taking it over?

And two of Marvel's most individual heroes had their turn in the spotlight in very special Limited Series. Bill Mantlo wove a tale of the RAWHIDE KID as an aging gunslinger, faced with the demise of the old west. What room is there for a gunslinging legend in the new industrial age? And the GARGOYLE, manic mainstay of the Defenders, exorcised the ghosts of his past and the demon who originally inhabited his body. With eye-catching covers by Berni Wrightson, this J. Marc DeMatteis/Mark Badger endeavor was an unusual peek into the private life of a misunderstood hero.

Even more bizarre and outrageous Limited Series were released by editor Archie Goodwin, as the Epic line of comics expanded to embrace new creator-owned work. For the scoop on THE BLACK DRAGON, THE ONE, TIMESPIRITS and more, join us next month!

— Brian Nelson

MARVEL® COMICS PRICE GUIDE

1985 was a special year, no doubt about it. Will we ever forget when John Romita, Jr. was proclaimed Marvel's first and only Hunk-of-the-Month? Collect the 1985 run of Marvels, and you'll have more photos of the trend-setting Iron Man artist than you'll know what to do with! Here's what the comics we profiled this month should cost you at your local comics specialty shop, as rated by Robert Overstreet's THE COMIC BOOK PRICE GUIDE #20. But remember: this is only a guide. Actual prices may vary, and should be lower for copies in fair or poor condition.

	CONDITION		
	Good	Fine	Mint
BEAUTY AND THE BEAST			
1-4	.25	.75	1.50
BUCKAROO BANZAI			
1-2	.40	.80	
CONAN THE DESTROYER			
1-2	.25	.50	
DUNE			
1-3	.40	.80	
ETERNALS			
1-3	.50	1.00	
GARGOYLES			
1	.25	.75	1.50
2-4	.50	1.00	
ICEMAN			
2-4	.25	.75	1.50
KITTY PRIDE AND WOLVERINE			
3-6	.60	1.75	3.50
LIFE OF CAPTAIN MARVEL			
1-5	.35	1.00	2.00
LONGSHOT			
1	3.35	10.00	20.00
2	2.50	7.50	15.00
3-4	2.00	6.00	12.00
MACHINE MAN (VOL. 2)			
4	.60	1.20	
MARVEL COMICS			
33-38	.35	1.00	2.00
MARVEL SUPER-HEROES			
9-12	.35	1.00	2.00
MUPPETS TAKE MANHATTAN			
3	.30	.60	
NIGHTCRAWLER			
1	.50	1.50	3.00
2	.35	1.00	2.00
QUESTPROBE			
1	.40	.80	
RAWHIDE KID			
1-4	.50	1.00	
RED SONJA: THE MOVIE			
1-2	.40	.80	
ROCKET RACCOON			
1-4	.25	.75	1.50
SECRET WARS II			
1	.30	.90	1.80
2-6	.65	1.30	
SECTAURS			
1-3	.40	.80	
SHEENA			
2	.40	.80	
SQUADRON SUPREME			
1	.30	.90	1.80
2-4	.50	1.00	
STARRIORS			
3-4	.50	1.00	
SWORD OF SOLOMON KANE			
1	.50	1.00	
2	.45	.90	
2010			
1-2	.40	.80	

Welcome back to *Reel Marvel*, the column which focuses on Marvel's rich history of television and movie adaptations, both past, present, and future. Following a popular news column in issue #101, this issue we'll again discuss the future of Marvel, on television, on film and on video!

The biggest news is about Marvel's green giantess, *She-Hulk!* Plans and photos for a She-Hulk feature film to star Brigette Nielsen, were a hit at the Cannes Film Festival early this summer. With much response and offers of financial backing, the film is expected to start shooting this Fall (maybe November) for a next-summer overseas debut. No American distributor has been lined up, so it may remain an overseas production for now. Tamara Asseyez of New World is producing, while it looks like Carl Gottlieb will be the writer (after comics veteran Mark Verheiden turned it down). Title star Brigette Nielsen has been keeping herself busy on the low-budget *Horrorscope* (aka *976-EVIL II*).

Bill Bixby will *not* appear in the film, as the origin sequence will be talked about rather than seen. She-Hulk *will* fight a super-villain, and is the intelligent character seen in the comics. She designed her own outfit (seen in the above picture, which is worth a thousand words). Assayez says the film will have "the humor of *Beetlejuice*, the look of *Batman*, and the action of the *Punisher*." 'Nuff said.

What of *Power Pack*? NBC did not pick up the series for a Fall slot, but the Canadian Paragon Entertainment (in association with New World) is still trying to sell the series to the syndication market.

I've seen the half-hour live-action pilot, and it's surprisingly well done and enjoyable. The kids are sweet (although Katie's hair looks a little too *Brady Bunch*), but not cloyingly so. Bradley Machry as Jack, is the most enjoyable to watch, though the script kind of sets him up for that role. Alex (Nathaniel Morea), Julie (Margot Finley), and young Katy (Jaclyn Holmes) all handle the strange events of the story well. The special effects are not *Flash* level, but better than most TV effects (the shrinking effects are the best I've seen on TV). If the show does go to series, you'll definitely want to watch it.

By the way, an interesting note (or notes) about the *Power Pack* pilot. Before a show is finished, it has music put to it, but that's usually one of the last steps. For display purposes though, a soundtrack must be used. Thus, on the work-print of the *Punisher* film, the fantastic *Hellraiser* soundtrack by Christopher Young was used, as well as the Tangerine Dream *Firestarter* music. On the display film of *Flash* seen last year at conventions, Danny Elfman's *Batman* music was heard. And on the presentation pilot of *Power Pack*, Elfman is again heard, this time with the moody theme from *Edward Scissorhands!*

The long awaited *Captain America*, though out on video in England (I've got a copy!) is *still* missing from Columbia's release schedule from 1991. They're still dragging their heels on this 21st Century film which stars Matt Salinger as Cap and Scott Paulin as the Red Skull.

The Punisher's video release has been a modest hit, with rental tapes hard to find on store shelves. If you haven't been able to find it, or can't afford the $92.95 price tag, look for it on cable right around Halloween. New World International is pushing for *Punisher II* to have mainly foreign theatrical distribution as the first one was successful doing so. Dolph Lundgren is not attached to the project, and one inside source said *Punisher II* was a pipe dream. Plans for the one hour live-action TV series by New World for ABC seem to be stalled.

Despite a notice in the *Comic Buyer's Guide*, *Spider-Man* has *not* been shot as a pilot film for ABC. It was being developed by New World from a script by Manny Coto. Though the network was hot on the idea, Marvel didn't like the way the series was being developed. It seems that this *Spider-Man* was more like *The Fly* (as in the Jeff Goldblum movie), and Marvel didn't want their (almost) only non-mutant hero mutating. Currently, New World's plans for the series are on hold, while negotiations for a feature film are under way. The *Spider-Man* film rights have been pulled from 21st Century, and negotiations are now with Carolco, for James Cameron's Lightstorm to produce.

Above: *The Sensational She-Hulk, ala Brigette Nielsen.*

As we reported in #101, Lou Ferrigno's wife, Carla, said that he and Bill Bixby had started work on *The Rebirth of the Incredible Hulk*. However, Bill Bixby's agent asserted that Bill was not working on another *Hulk* project, nor was one on his future schedule. He also noted that Carla and Lou were full of "wishful thinking." NBC also stated they would not be doing another *Hulk* film. Odd fact #1: *The Incredible Hulk* is one of only three US shows being aired in Japan. *The Fugitive* and *Mission: Impossible* are the others.

Zorro, the swashbuckling hero now starring in his own Marvel comic, has been renewed for a third season on The Family Channel.

Those two excellent dudes who have also gotten their own Marvel comic will be your way this year in both live-action and animated adventures. Saturday mornings on FOX, you can tune in to *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure*, and FOX is planning a live-action evening show as well. Plus, be on the lookout for *Bill & Ted's Bogus Journey* (the renamed *Bill & Ted Go To Hell*).

Toxic Crusaders (with the Toxic Avenger) is on line for a syndicated 13 episode animated series this fall, as well as a nine-figure toy line.

New Line Cinema's *Ghost Rider* feature film is sitting still for now, but movement is expected soon. The *Sub-Mariner* film is classified as "dead in the water," while the *Fantastic Four* are still waiting in the rocket ship. No screenplay or treatment exists for the latter film, and no work can be done until one exists.

The X-Men is (are?) plodding along. The feature film for Carolco is being written by Gary Goldman (*Total Recall*) with a mixture of new and old X-Men including Wolverine, Nightcrawler, and Professor X versus Magneto. Plans for a five-part FOX animated mini-series have apparently fallen through.

Marvel Productions, the animation arm of Marvel, is continuing work for the fall's programs: *Attack of the Killer Tomatoes (FOX)*, *Muppet Babies*, and *Bucky O'Hare and the Toad Wars* (Syndicated).

Siegfried and Roy — Masters of the Impossible is an animated series Marvel Productions is working on to syndicate for Fall 1992. I must confess that the concept of animated magic and magicians escapes me. What's the point of watching magic if it's not live?

Most of Marvel's animated super hero projects from the last 25 years may soon be available on video. Negotiations are underway for Best Film & Video to release the videos starting late this year or early next year. I may be doing some consulting work on the line with them, so we'll let you know more as it happens.

Shelly Duvall's proposed live-action *Daredevil* TV series for FOX has been put on indefinite hold.

No news on the *Spider-Man* musical arena show, or Universal's *Iron Man*, the feature film to be directed by Stuart Gordon.

On the Epic side of things, Trans Atlantic Entertainmnet, is working on *Hell on Earth: Hellraiser III*, though Clive Barker is not involved.

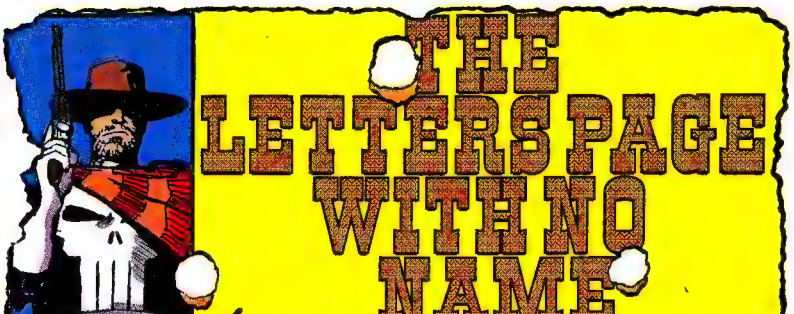
Problems have held up both Moebius's *Airtight Garage* and *Blueberry*. After a year of work, including storyboards for the animated film, *Airtight Garage* has been put on hold. Money is currently being gathered to change production houses as the concepts were not translating well with the Russian animation crew SoyuzMultfilm.

The Soviet animators haven't stopped working with Moebius, however. They've begun work on *Upon A Star*, an 85-minute animated film adapting the Epic Graphic Novel *Moebius #1 (Upon A Star)* and the first half of *#5 (Gardens of Aedna)*. The more simplistic "Disney-like" storyline and artwork is cited as being much more linear. With the clarity of the graphic novel art, very few storyboards will even need to be produced! Several minutes of animation have been completed and will have premiered at this year's San Diego Comic-Con (4th of July weekend). Full animation begins at the end of this year, with a late 1993 date projected for the release of the film.

Meanwhile, *Blueberry* is tied up in the courts. Moebius and Charlier's estate (the late Charlier wrote the series) are suing High Speed Productions, the French production company behind Intermedia Films. They dispute the filmers' rights to make the film, feeling that the original licensing contract is by now null and void. The suit goes to court September 25th.

Hope this news will whet your appetite for a Marvelous future. The next five *Reel Marvel* columns (#108-113) will be a comprehensive guide to the 1965 *Marvel Super Heroes* shows, all adapted directly from the comics of the day. Next month, it's the man who fights in red, white, and blue. Captain America throws his mighty shield, and you can catch it . . . next month in *Reel Marvel!*

***Above:** The Sensational Jennifer Walters, ala Brigeette Nielsen.*



Send your letters to: MARVEL AGE MAG AZINE, c/o Marvel Comics Group, 387 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016.

Attention Correspondents: All letters to be considered for publication must include your complete name and address, though we will gladly withhold that info by request!

Dear Renée,

Hey! What's the big idea leaving out Andy Mangels' *"Reel Marvel"* from the newest issue of MARVEL AGE (#105)? I gotta tell ya, the only reason I blow a dollar on MARVEL AGE is because of Andy's column. I could care less about the TOMB OF DRACULA, or Mark Gruenwald telling budding, young creators "Sunoco is taking applications." I want *"Reel Marvel"!* Leave it out again, and you've lost a reader.

Delmo (the Saint) Walters, Jr.
1831 White Plains Road
Bronx, NY 10462

Gosh, Saint Delmo, we're sorry already! Actually, if blame is to be laid at anyone's door, it would have to be assistant editor Mike who made the call. Sorry it's affected you so deeply, and you can rest assured that Andy won't be bumped again. In fact, if you take a look at this issue's She-Hulk report, I'm sure that full color photo of Ms. Nielsen more than makes up for the lack of Andy-ness in issue #105.

Also on the *Reel Marvel* front, is an episode guide of *The Marvel Super Heroes* TV show from 1967. Keep your eyes peeled, because this feature will be a good one!

Dear MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE,

I am a fifteen year old amateur writer, my favorite writer is Chris Claremont, and my favorite artists are Ron Lim, Jeff Johnson, and Art Adams, also colorist Joe Rosas. In all my years of collecting Marvel Comics I felt I would never have to complain, but now that has changed. I am writing to you because I feel women are not being portrayed enough. What I mean is in an ongoing series, like THE SHE-HULK or titles that were going on in the past, like RED SONJA. Here are a few suggestions:

Have a woman as the Mighty Thor, when the real one was banned. I realize it is late for that to happen now.

Or have a fast woman, like Makkari and Quicksilver. Well, thanks for your time.

Until the Silver Surfer turns platinum, make mine Marvel!

Ian Walp
364 E. Calf Avenue
Ridgecrest, CA 93555

Well, thanks for addressing this burning issue, Ian, even though you did so rather convolutedly. Sure, there aren't too many series starring female heroes right now, and any quick perusal of the MARVEL AGE *Coming Attractions* will tell you that. But there are plenty of female characters in the Marvel Universe, and there's no denying that, either.

Writer/artist John Byrne has said that he felt that Susan Richards, the Invisible Woman, is the most powerful member of the Fantastic Four. She-Hulk can beat just about anybody when it comes to brute strength. And what about Phoenix, Elektra, Storm, or Thundra?

As I've often said when people ask me, "Hey, how come there isn't a *this* character or that character?" Well, Ian, you say you want to be a writer, make one! I'm sure you've heard the expression, you want something done right . . . well, you know how the rest of it goes. But seriously, it's up to the people to whom these things are important to, to bring about the changes that they want to see. And if that wasn't true, Ian, Stan Lee never would have made Marvel Comics in the first place!

Dear MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE,

I recently heard about the Marvel Comics Group, Inc. selling shares to pay off a bank agreement. Can you tell me information regarding the shares? Thanks for your time. Make mine Marvel.

Ian Walp
364 E. Calf Avenue
Ridgecrest, CA 93555

Well, Ian, if you read last issue's *Mondo Marvel* column, you'd have witnessed a brief piece on this very subject! Spider-Man and Stan Lee hit Wall Street, and trading was hot and heavy. If you're interested, ask your broker! By the way, Marvel's stock goes by the moniker MRV, so check out the financial pages of your local paper to see how we're doing.

Dear MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE:

I am writing in response to look out for Marvel Comics, or something like that, anyway.

In the August 26th Sports Illustrated College Football Preview, starting on page 42, is an article about Ken Swilling. The picture shows Ken taking a snooze and on his stomach there is CAPTAIN AMERICA #121. And in the article is a little about Cap, and I just wanted to let you know! Thanks for your time.

Until Captain America joins the Communist Party — make mine Marvel.

Ian Walp
364 E. Calf Avenue
Ridgecrest, CA 93555

Hmmmmmm, there's something awfully familiar about this guy.

Anyway, thanks and congratulations, Ian, for being the first Marveloid to enter the Marvel Age Media Watch! You have earned a No-Prize! If any of you sharp eyed Marveloids spot something in the news, send us a copy and you too can join this time-honored clique.

And hey! There's a yellow box around us! Time for our LETTER OF

THE MONTH, a correspondence of some interest to our merry band of Marveloids. This month's query is from Phil Nepsy. Take it away, Phil —!

Dear Madam or Sir,

I would love to be a Marvel Reviewer. Please send me any comics you would like me to review. Again, I say I would like to be a Marvel Reviewer.

Thank you in advance.

Phil Nepsy
15 St. William
Tilbury, Ontario
NOP 2hO
Canada 900826

Well, we'd like to Phil, but we haven't done a Marvel Reviewers feature since MARVEL AGE #91, which is about a year and a half gone by. There were a lot of reasons why we couldn't continue this feature. One of which is that, well, let's face it, a lot of books take much longer than expected to get finished. That delays every step down along the line, and then our Marvel Reviewers don't get them to read until the comic they are previewing has virtually hit the stands. Plus the trafficking, the back and forth with the mail — hey, it was problematic, okay?

However, perhaps we could tweak this a bit. How about if you readers send in reviews of comic books that are just published, instead? For example, this issue of MARVEL AGE has a cover date of December, 1991.

Your first assignment is to review any Marvel book with a cover date of December, 1991, to be printed in our January, 1992 issue. It's sort of the same thing, but different. Hope this fills the void.

Dear MARVEL AGE,

I am ready for my first No-Prize. I just purchased my first MARVEL MASTERWORKS, the second X-Men one. I know this is old, but I just want to clear it up. In the first Juggernaut issue, it shows Professor X using Cerebro to defeat the Juggernaut. But the Cerebro only detects mutants, and being a major X-MEN fan I know that Juggernaut isn't a mutant, then Cerebro shouldn't have detected him. But, the Juggernaut is one of the Marvel Universe's strongest villains, and would've affected Cerebro because of his great power. The computer, along with Professor X's mind, couldn't have missed such an enormous human power source.

No-Prize? I hope so.

Until Professor X joins the Hair Club for Men, make mine Marvel!

Brad Convissar
1373 Heartwood Drive
Cherry Hill, NJ 08003

Well, Juggernaut isn't a mutant, but if you re-read that issue, you'll notice that Professor X had Cerebro's setting on "Guys Who Will Be Poked in the Eye in 1991," which of course, then homed in on the Juggernaut without so much as a "by your leave."

Close, Brad . . . you were ever so close! Your best No-Prize bet is the Marvel Age Media Watch, and I could tell you what major magazine is doing a major feature on the X-MEN and its creators, but I'm not gonna. After all, I already have a No-Prize. Scan your newsstands and try again!

Dear MARVEL AGE,

Here is my list of Hot, Good, and Cool,

HOT
AMAZING SPIDER-MAN
X-FORCE
SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN
SPIDER-MAN
PUNISHER WAR JOURNAL
GOOD
SLEEPWALKER
TOXIC AVENGER
WEB OF SPIDER-MAN
PUNISHER
X-MEN
COLD
SHE-HULK
WHAT IF?
WHAT THE?!
ROBO COP
SOLAR MAN

I know Solar Man is out of print, and only made it to number 2, and thank you for listening.

JR Gonzalez
3115 N. Keating
Chicago, IL 60641

Thanks for sounding off, JR, and glad to see that gunshot wound healed up so well. It's good to know what you guys out there think of our books, good or bad. The only way we can tell if what we're doing is on the mark or not is to have you tell us. We may be great, but we aren't mind readers!

Although I do suggest you try SHE-HULK again, especially now that John Byrne is doing the writing and penciling chores! We think you'll find it very funny, very exciting, and very Shulkie!

Dear Guys,

I have been told that a good way to get your letter printed is to ask a question. Sooo, my question is,

Where the bloody heck is Longshot?

I've been reading this fine publication for a while now, and my hopes were raised and dashed many times. First you said there was to be a Longshot graphic novel. Then it was going to be a Longshot limited series. Then it was going to be a Longshot unlimited series. I even witnessed him joining and quitting my favorite X-group, and thought, "Hey, his series won't be too long in coming," and I made the long journey to my favorite comics shop every Friday to look for it, but to my chagrin, it was all for naught. I really miss the lucky guy.

The question has been put in front of you. Please print this. I know that if this fine letter written by an outstanding young man like myself is printed, you'll do the honorable thing and answer it. There are a lot of people who like Longshot and I don't think we can bear being kept in the dark much longer. I hear Excalibur is getting a new member, could it be . . .?

Junal Thigpen
1617 W. Sparks Street
Philadelphia, PA 19141

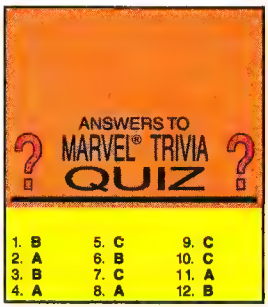
And the answer is — I dunno.

Things change so quickly around here, Junal, it's tough to keep tabs on what the heck is happening, but we try. Unfortunately, there are no plans that we know of for the Longshot series at this time, but who knows what can happen next week?

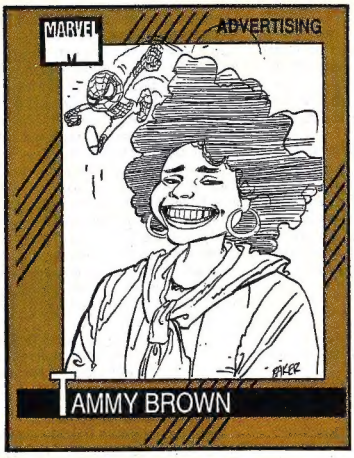
Remember the Hercules graphic novel? The Mantis limited series? Of course you don't, because they never happened! They were announced with much fanfare, but then something happened and shot the whole thing to heck.

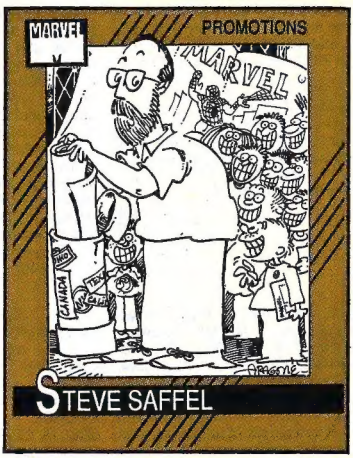
You can probably think of a number of movies or TV shows that are announced and never see the light of day. Now, we aren't saying this is the case with Longshot. We've been wrong before! (Just ask Delmo the Saint!) But, if we do hear anything, Junal, you can bet that we'll give you the full scoop in MARVEL AGE!

And that's about all the space we have for this month! Please keep those cards and letters coming, because you readers really are special! See you in thirty days!



1. B	5. C	9. C
2. A	6. B	10. C
3. B	7. C	11. A
4. A	8. A	12. B





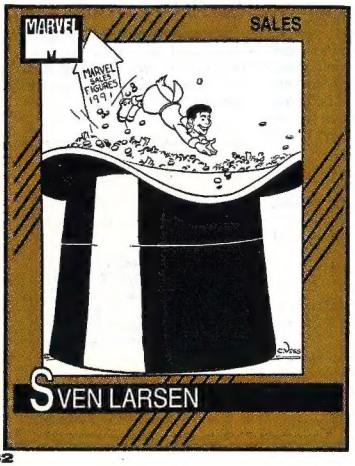
STILL MORE MARVEL COLLECTOR'S CARDS!

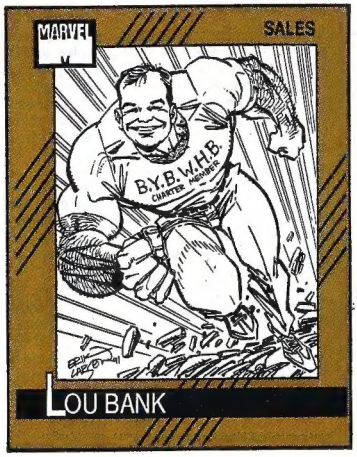
Well, here we are with Batch Number Four of the Marvel Collector's Cards. Since we've run out of the Editorial Personnel, we thought you'd like to take a gander at some of our ultra-devoted Sales Staff, without whom you could *never get your comics at all!!!!*

It's a super-star-studded collection, too! With art by Erik Larsen, Sergio Aragones, Charles Vess and Kyle Baker! Next month should just about round out this collector's series, with still more of the zany Marvel crew!

You'll also want to be here for our extra-special, in-depth interview with John Romita Jr.! John talks about his upcoming Ghost Rider/Punisher/Wolverine book, HEARTS OF DARKNESS! Not only that, but we'll even give you a sneak peek at what is sure to be the hottest book of the holiday season! Don't miss it!!

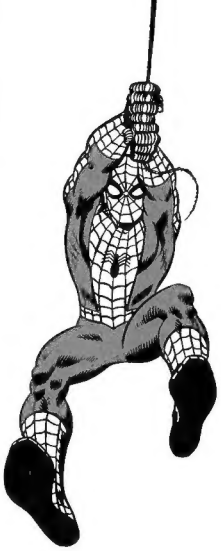
—Mike Lackey





THE MARVEL® CHECKLIST

Hello, friends, and welcome to another Coming Attractions, courtesy of the wonderful people in Marvel Sales Department! We hope you find this column informative, and entertaining!! Let's not dally another instant!



TITLES SHIPPING NOVEMBER 5

- ☐ AVENGERS WEST COAST #78 $1.00
  Thomas/Ross/Dzon
- ☐ CAPTAIN AMERICA #396 $1.00
  Gruenwald/Levitz/Bulandi
- ☐ DARKHAWK #11 $1.00
  Fingeroth/Manley/Villagran
- ☐ NAMOR #22 $1.00
  Byrne/Wiacek
  Namor's taken over by the Plant People!
- ☐ NFL SUPERPRO #4 $1.00
  Nicieza/Delbo/DeCarlo
- ☐ PIRATES OF DARK WATER #3 $1.00
  Zimmerman/Zick/Gil
- ☐ PUNISHER #58 $1.00
  Painted Mike Golden cover!
- ☐ UNCANNY X-MEN #284 $1.00
  Byrne/Portacio/Thibert
- ☐ WEB OF SPIDER-MAN #84 $1.00
  Mackie/Saviuk/Williams
- ☐ SHE-HULK #35 $1.50
  Byrne/Williams
  Shulkie battles the X-Humed Men!
- ☐ EXCALIBUR #46 $1.50
  Davis/Farmer
- ☐ DAREDEVIL #300 $2.00
  Chichester/Weeks/Williamson
  Don't dare miss it!
- ☐ HOOK SUPER SPECIAL $3.95
  Vess/Various

TITLES SHIPPING NOVEMBER 12

- ☐ ALF #49 $1.00
  Gallagher/Manak/Severin
- ☐ AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #357 $1.00
  Milgrom/Bagley/Emberlin
- ☐ AMERICAN TAIL II #1 $1.00
  Chichester/Wildman
- ☐ BARBIE #13 $1.00
  Robbins/Slate/Wilshire
- ☐ BILL & TED'S COMIC BOOK #2 $1.00
  Dorkin/DeStefano
  Death takes a holiday!
- ☐ QUASAR #30 $1.00
  Gruenwald/Capullo/Candario
- ☐ SLEEPWALKER #8 $1.00
  Budiansky/Blevins
  Guest-starring Deathlok!
- ☐ THOR #442 $1.00
  DeFalco/Frenz/Milgrom
  Don Blake returns!
- ☐ WONDER MAN #5 $1.00
  Jones/Johnson/Harpes
- ☐ MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS #93 $1.25
  Various
- ☐ ALPHA FLIGHT #104 $1.50
  Lobdell/Morgan/Ivy
- ☐ NEW MUTANTS #87 $1.50
  Simonson/Liefeld/Wiacek
  Re-issue! 1st Cable Appearance! Wow!
- ☐ ORIGINAL GHOST RIDER RIDES AGAIN #7 $1.50
  DeMatteis/Budiansky/Dzuban
- ☐ TOXIC AVENGER #10 $1.50
  Moench/Ramos/Mayerik
- ☐ GHOST RIDER #21 $1.50
  Mackie/Wagner/Tex
  Ghost Rider v. Snowblind!
- ☐ THE DESTROYER #2 $1.75
  Murray/Lawlis/Smith
- ☐ MARVEL SUPER HEROES #8 $2.25
  Various
- ☐ SAVAGE SWORD #193 $2.25
  Thomas/Buscema/Chan
  The Team-Supreme!
- ☐ WOLVERINE #50 $2.50
  Hama/Silvestri/Green
  Special Die-cut cover!
- ☐ SPIDER-MAN SAGA #3 $2.95
  Herdling/Various
- ☐ WITHIN OUR REACH $7.95
  Various
- ☐ SILVER SURFER GN: HOMECOMING $12.95
  Starlin/Reinhold

TITLES SHIPPING NOVEMBER 19

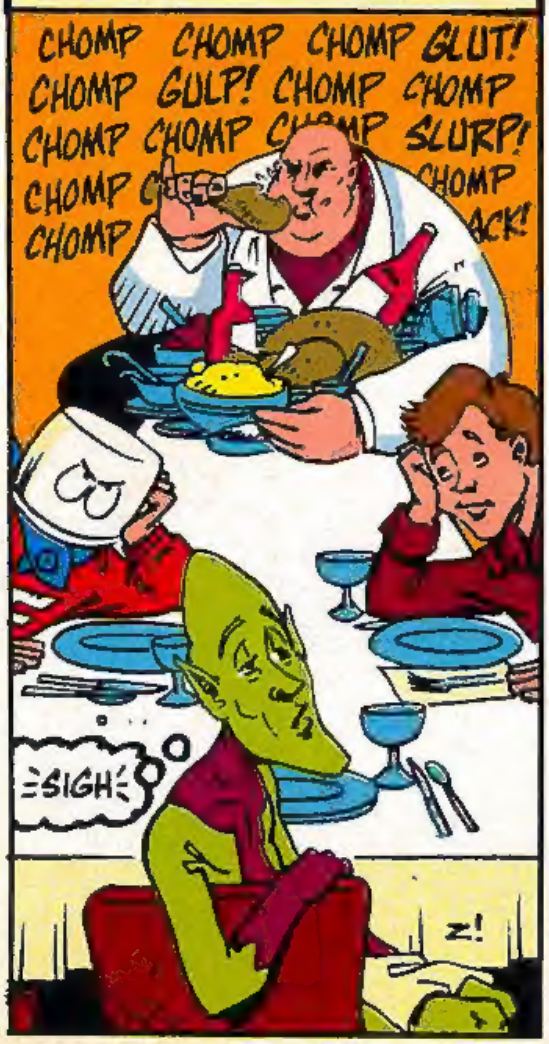
- ☐ AVENGERS #343 $1.00
  Harras/Epting/Palmer
- ☐ CONAN #252 $1.00
  Thomas/Docherty/Chan
- ☐ G.I. JOE #120 $1.00
  Hama/Wildman/Emberlin
  Sam Kieth Dossier Page!
- ☐ GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY #20 $1.00
  Valentino/Montano
- ☐ INCREDIBLE HULK #389 $1.00
  Field/Baker/Farmer
  Hulk v. The Man-Thing!
- ☐ MARVEL AGE #108 $1.00
  John Romita Jr. interviewed
- ☐ MARVEL TALES #257 $1.00
  Cover by Klaus Janson!
- ☐ PUNISHER #59 $1.00
  Baron/Haynes/Palmiotti
- ☐ X-FACTOR #74 $1.00
  David/Stroman/Milgrom
  Introducing Slab!
- ☐ X-MEN #4 $1.00
  Byrne/Lee/Williams
- ☐ WHAT IF?
  What if Phoenix Rose Again?
- ☐ ROBOCOP #23 $1.50
  Furman/Sullivan
- ☐ SHIELD #31 $1.50
  Chichester/Stiner/Hudson
- ☐ SPIDER-MAN #18 $1.75
  Erik Larsen does Spidey!
- ☐ MARVEL CHRISTMAS SPECIAL $2.25
  Various
- ☐ DOCTOR WHO #180 $3.95
- ☐ HOOK BOOKSHELF VERSION $5.95
  Vess/Various

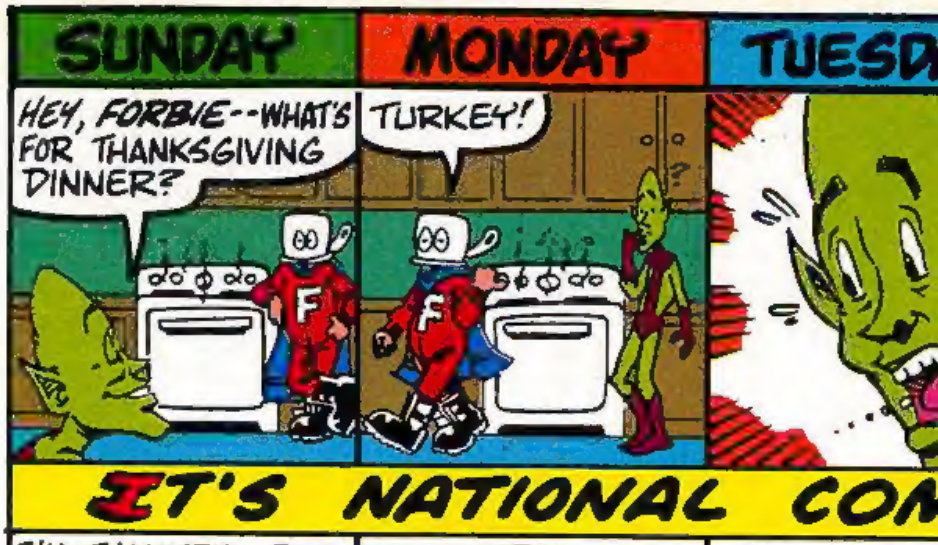
TITLES SHIPPING NOVEMBER 26

- ☐ AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #358 $1.00
  Milgrom/Bagley/Emberlin
  Special gatefold cover!
- ☐ BARBIE FASHION #13 $1.00
  Robbins/Conner/Lucas
- ☐ CAPTAIN PLANET #4 $1.00
  Dutter/Delbo/Baskerville
- ☐ FANTASTIC FOUR #360 $1.00
  DeFalco/Ryan/Bulandi
- ☐ IRON MAN #276 $1.00
  Byrne/Ryan/Wiacek
- ☐ NEW WARRIORS #19 $1.00
  Nicieza/Bagley/Mahlstedt
- ☐ SILVER SURFER #61 $1.00
  Marz/Lim/Chistopher
- ☐ SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #184 $1.00
  DeMatteis/Buscema
- ☐ THOR #443 $1.00
  DeFalco/Frenz/Milgrom
- ☐ X-FORCE #6 $1.00
  Liefeld/Nicieza
- ☐ MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS #94 $1.25
  Various
- ☐ X-MEN CLASSIC #67 $1.25
  Claremont/Cockrum/Wiacek
- ☐ DR. STRANGE #37 $1.50
  Thomas/Lawliss/Sanders
- ☐ MOON KNIGHT #34 $1.50
  Kavanagh/Garney/Palmer
- ☐ THE NAM $1.50
  Dixon
- ☐ SUBURBAN JERSEY NINJA SHE-DEVILS $1.75
  Gerber/Connors
- ☐ DEATHLOK #7 $1.75
  Wright/Cowan/Manley
- ☐ PUNISHER WAR JOURNAL #38 $1.75
  Dixon/Wagner
- ☐ WAR MAN GN $9.95
  Dixon/Zanotto
- ☐ GHOST RIDER TPB: RESURRECTED $12.95
  Mackie/Salatares/Tex
  Ooooh, scary!

THE 1991 MARVEL AGE® CALENDAR

WRITER: MIKE LACKEY
ARTIST: RON ZALME
COLORIST: RENEE' WITTERSTAETTER





IT'S NATIONAL CON

AY
WEDNESDAY
THURSDAY
FRIDAY
SATURDAY
RICK!!
MMPHG
NOVEMBER'S A MONTH TO COUNT BLESSINGS. I'M THANKFUL FOR MY "POP" POWERS!
POP
HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO JIM GALTON!
1
POP
2
MIC BOOK APPRECIATION WEEK!
MINO OF X-FORCE DOESN'T DO ROIC IN THE FIRST 30 OU GET THE BOOK OR FREE?
POP
5
6
HBD TO ROD RAMOS!
POP
7
HBD TO RICK JONES!
--IS NOT!!
I'LL TAKE CASH.
9
. FOR ENGTH!
HEY! IF MARVEL AGE DID AN ISSUE ON THE PILGRIMS...
13
...IT WOULD BE A PILGRIMAGE!
14
POP
HBD TO ASST. EDITOR JOHN LEW-ANDOW-SKI!
POP
15
16
VEINTE!
HBD TO OFFICE MGR. SUSAN EHRENREICH!
YOW
17
I'M THANKFUL I STILL HAVE A POT TO-- YIKES!
23
21
...WEAR ON MY HEAD.
DAN
MY BEST COLOR.
27
HAPPY TURKEY DAY!
Huh?
23
I'M THANKFUL THAT I'M NOT A GEEK LIKE FORBIE!
24
HEY!!
30